

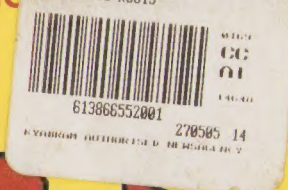
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No 169 June/July 2005

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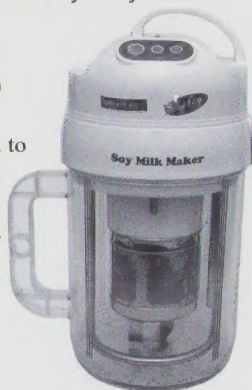
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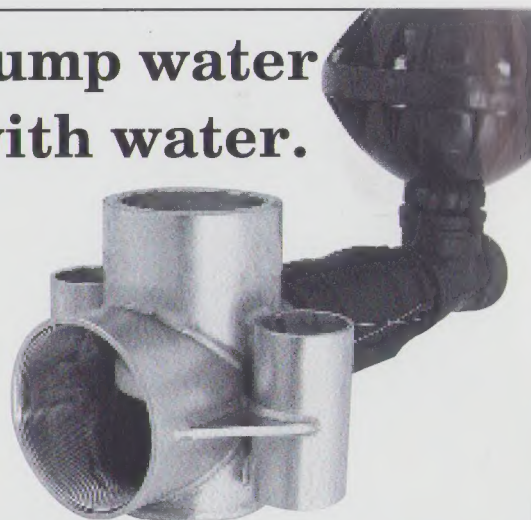
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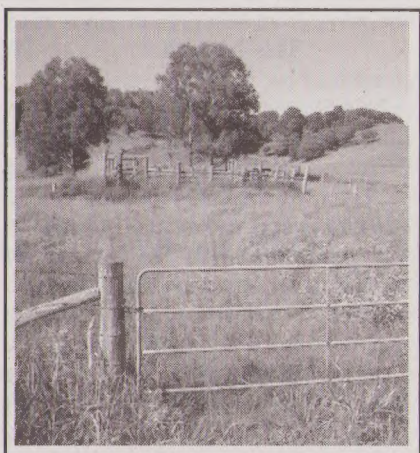
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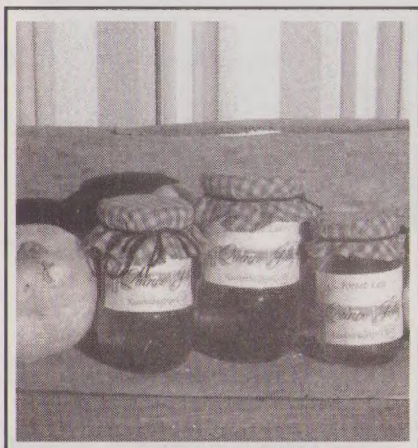
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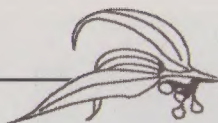
Back Cover: A robust little Dexter calf contemplates his new world.

Edited by Megg Miller and Mary Horsfall.

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GUMNUT GOSSIP

by Megg Miller.

It's quieter, much quieter, in the office with David away on sick leave. He's been in and out a few times, but must take it easy for a while. What's wrong? Heart attack! We have a standing joke that he will do anything to get out of unloading the truck delivering the new *Grass Roots*. There were lots of boxes from the previous delivery that needed relocating back in March and when we mentioned it, he would say, 'Yeah, yeah, I'll do it tomorrow'. He fell ill before he got to the job, so the boxes had to be hurriedly shifted to make room for the new consignment. Don't get us wrong, we're not being callous about his ill health; he thinks it's funny too and wryly agrees he's got out of all sorts of tedious jobs. He'll be back soon, invigorated by the rest and full of new ideas.

With winter pressing we're donning our alpine gear again. The office takes hours to heat up each day so the woolly hats and scarves and thick overcoats have come out of storage. It's not exactly high fashion, but comfy, and we know we must look a crazy lot to visitors who come in from their warm cars or the sunshine and find us huddled under layers and layers of clothes. It's definitely time to find those felted insoles that are made from Perendale wool and cosy to wear. You might recall the article 'Walking on Wool' last Oct/Nov (GR 165) that talked about the benefits of pure wool and provided tips for making your own insoles. I wonder if alpaca fleece can be felted and used to keep fingers and toes warm?

We probably should be remaking old woollies into leg warmers or knee rugs, but hey, there is only so much recycling you can do when a magazine has to be produced. What we are doing, or at least Suni is conscientiously collecting, is the water from her cooked vegies at lunchtime. 'We shouldn't be throwing that out', she commented one lunchtime. 'It's a waste of vitamins and minerals. I'm going to collect it and use it in my homemade soup.' I sampled her soup and it was so thick and full of goodies like barley, split peas and vegies that the spoon could have

stood up in it. It's perfect fare for cold days. I'm sure Roberino and our other recycling pundits will approve.

As far as we're concerned all GR readers are special. Some, of course, are a little more special than others. One reader in this latter category is Michelle Dixon, who has been a loyal reader for many years as well as an occasional contributor. In 1980 Michelle was told she had five years to live; she's still with us today, although she has to spend 12 in every 24 hours on a life support machine. 'As I tell my mates, it's all in the mind, just get a life and get on with it!' she said about her secret for success. Some time back we mentioned a note we had received from her that sported lacy edges, the result of nibbling by her pet budgie. Michelle wrote recently that this special little pet had suffered kidney problems and had to be put down. It's amazing how pets can inspire and teach us as well as providing great companionship. Enjoying Mima and caring for her led Michelle to discover she has a gift for nurturing birds and chooks, so now much of her time goes into caring for rescued birds that have been neglected, injured or abused. The passing of a companion pet can leave an awful emptiness, but it's wonderful Michelle can devote her resources and nurturing skills to the needy birds that find their way into her care.

In our mail recently was the most gorgeous multicoloured rainbow reflector. A little like a dream catcher, it's made of wire and beads and spirals around, ending with a radiant crystal. Sabrina and I are very taken with it and can imagine how all the glass beads would sparkle and radiate when hung in the light. We're sure some readers would like to try their hand at making this 'rainbow catcher', but all the accompanying note on my table said was 'Thanks Grass Roots for the kindness, love and goodwill that you supply to us all. Keep spreading the rainbows, from Susan and family'. We'd love some details Susan on making this lovely object.

While discussing mail, a reminder:

please don't send money through the post. We all know this and what the outcome can be if you do, but a few readers still ignore the risk and send us cash. We had a most upset chap ring recently and ask why his daughter had not received her magazine. Yes, it transpired he had sent cash. Just by chance Mary was talking on the phone to Stacy her daughter that day and, as Stacy works for Australia Post, asked her advice. The long and the short of it was the location of an item at the dead letter office incorrectly addressed to us. We're not sure how successful our reader has been in claiming the item, but hope the situation has been resolved successfully. Not all letters with dollars in them end up at the dead letter office, but please, it's not a safe way to renew the subscription to your favourite magazine.

We're loving the articles we're receiving and featuring and hope everyone finds plenty of good reading this issue. The advice on using second-hand timber is terrific; Suni wants to know why it wasn't around a couple of years ago when she was chasing up recycled material for renovations. I was fascinated by the DIY mosaics, having already initiated a project using an old table. I was amazed to read that Suzanne breaks up her tiles in a towel. All these months I've been dropping them on the concrete and dodging flying pieces. I have had the odd cut or two, but now can obtain mosaic pieces in a safe and civilised way. There are always handy tips in GR, regardless of your interests.

Before finishing up, don't be tempted to throw out all your used Christmas cards or even birthday cards when you're housebound on cold winter weekends. We've got just the project to use them in: a hanging decoration for Christmas that we'll feature in a forthcoming issue. It's attractive to look at and simple to make. Any more ideas for using up cards that are too nice to part with? Happy reading and may your fingers and toes stay deliciously warm. ♪

Land Of The Young

by Marlene Booker, Wheeny Creek, NSW.

At the end of 'Adventurous Bush Living', Marlene and family were awaiting their first WWOOFers. This practical step has brought them some bush luxuries and a new name.

The arrival of Rachael and Damien from Queensland was an exciting time for all of us; it was our first time as hosts and their first WWOOFing experience. They set up their tent site on the other side of our property and became our neighbours.

Their time with us was very productive as we kept busy clearing, collecting firewood, making vegie gardens and getting to know each other. We start our days early in the summer because it can get very hot in this valley. One day it reached 41° C by 11am so we stopped work and sat in the creek. While they were here Rachael and Damien saw the plumbing installed in the bathroom-cum-laundry. Wow, the luxury of using a washing machine was a welcome event. We felt as if we had known them for a long time and it was sad to see them depart, but they left their mark with a sign they had made for our front gate:

TIR NA-N O'G (cheer nar noy), which is mystical Celtic for 'land of the young'.

WE ACQUIRE SOME LUXURIES

Two days after Rachael and Damien left we had hot water (via gas bottles) for a shower – pure bliss.

The Fuel Stove

Last time I briefly mentioned our fuel stove. We managed to obtain an Everhot Deluxe 204 fuel stove with a water jacket. You beauty! The stove gives us hot water and heat, and it cooks our food – how practical can you get. However, installation of the stove was not without its challenges. New fire bricks came as part of the deal and Troy and I agreed that I would remove the old ones and he would put the new ones in. What a dirty job! The instructions were all a muddle. It turned into a stress mess. I have learnt not to do that

again in the foreseeable future.

Troy and the plumber hooked up the stove. Well, what a surprise; we had water everywhere. The jacket was cracked, so we had to get a new one. We finally sourced one from a firm in Melbourne. Two months later it arrived; the parcel had been around the state because no one could find us. That afternoon we lit it and awaited our first hot bath since the tub under the tree. What was all the noise? I was here by myself and soon found the source of the strange sound. Our fuel stove had been turned into a pressure cooker and was on fire. Quick thinking and a handy fire blanket saved the day. Our shack, Barter Bower, was full of smoke.

The plumber advised us that we needed to find a low-pressure storage unit. We found an ex-housing commission tank at a demolition yard. All was warm and cosy just in time for the -7° C



Our first bath was in the great outdoors and heated by a fire underneath; behind it is the vegie garden the WWOOFers built.



The piers for the shed; at this stage the caravan was our temporary kitchen.

winter mornings. I'm not kidding; the water in the birdbath stays frozen till noon. It's great weather for hard work

Prized Possessions

Once we had sanded and oiled the floors, in early May, we could open the shipping container holding most of our possessions. How exciting to have beds, clothes, chairs to sit on and our prized items around us. It turned our shack into a cosy little cottage. It was heaven to sleep in a bed with blankets and sheets again.

HOW MANY HOURS IN A DAY?

We haven't been idle outside either. We have loads of firewood, enough for years to come, stacked up on pallets. Some of the wood made chopping blocks for my market stall. We planted our paddock with pumpkins, melons and corn to eventually sell on our stall. We managed to build a shade cover over the citrus tree and saved it just in time before the frost hit.

There are always things to do and sometimes we need a 36-hour day. A few more WWOOFers would not go astray either. In late July we had Jo come to stay with us. Wow, what a girl. She can stay; she can split wood. For some reason I cannot for the life of me get the knack of wood splitting, much as I've tried. Jo and I stacked wood together, cleared Scotch thistle from the paddock and finished the choko fence,

all while ice was on the ground, and everywhere else. We also took Jo up to the CWA hall and put up a Christmas tree, which was a good ice-breaker. We all got along great. All our WWOOFers are still in contact with us and wish to return to see us and get dirty helping make mudbricks for our intended mud-brick and straw bale home.

By September the spring rain had arrived and there was no need to start the pump up to water the paddock of vegies. It was so lovely to hear the rain on the tin roof and not on a tarp. Yippee; no more emptying out water-

filled tarps in the middle of the night. One time I did not wake and the tarp burst right on top of the tent. What a scare. Boy, did I scream. It's all laughs and smiles now we have modernised.

All our greywater is saved downhill from the house for use on the vegies. The garden there had all the fence posts in the ground just waiting to be wired. It was a matter of finding the time to do it. Something else always came up.

THE GROWING MENAGERIE

Fencing the garden became more urgent once we had four new additions to our happy menagerie: Lucy and Dee and their little baby goats. We installed an electric fence around one paddock so the goats can frolic the mountain-side and clear it where it is too steep for us to do the work. One of the babies is so sweet we called her Lollie; she is always ready for a chat and follows me everywhere. We plan to milk the goats to make cheese and yogurt.

We also had six dogs for a while. My cattle dog, Eila, had four pups and Troy acquired a Bull Mastiff pup, Angus. I don't believe in feeding the dogs canned food, so the wood stove was getting a good run cooking rice, yoghurt, vegies and meat. Troy said the dogs ate better than we did.

Out of the blue appeared two wood ducks and soon another two joined us. They wander the paddock and have made friends with the goats and share



Troy completing the last external wall of Barter Bower.

their house with them; half an old water tank full of straw.

At seven weeks we took the puppies to the animal welfare. Then Angus cut himself on a sheet of tin and was off to the vet's for a stay. He had a long, deep cut right down his spine, so when he came home we had to keep him inside.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Angus's injury sparked a major occupational health and safety clean-up. The dog was not the first to get hurt; I had earlier walked into a plank that gave me whiplash and concussion. Everything seemed to find its way to the immediate space around the Bower, not on the other side of the paddock. No, it had to be within arm's reach, all piled up high where Troy said he knew where it was, yet he could never find anything. We couldn't get into the solar shed it was so full.

RECREATION

It was not all work; we took time out to go and see the AFL Grand Final at our local as we do not get reception for TV or mobile phones at home. It has been an adjustment from watching the TV every Saturday and Sunday for years to listening to the radio. We are not as noisy these days. We only get the ABC and have certain programs we listen to. If we miss them or the presenter is away we tend to get withdrawals.

We noticed that friends and family don't visit or telephone us as much as they used to; they think we are crazy. I'm sure fellow dramatic life-changers out there can relate. We are making new friends. After all, this is a new chapter in the book, or have we closed the book on our old life? I think so.

A YEAR DOWN THE TRACK

We did not completely escape life's stresses. Ni'a was studying for the HSC. We had to try to be very quiet and help her keep to the study plan. Then, of course, there were plans for university.

Troy one day said he was leaving, that his heart wasn't in it and he hadn't realised how hard it was all going to be. I told him to look at what he had done. All the worst was over. We didn't live in leaky tents any more. We were warm, cosy and dry. We were eating our own vegies and our fruit trees had fruit on



The Bower is finished and cosy and we have enough firewood for years to come.

them. It was happening. We'd made it through our first winter without anyone getting the flu. These were major achievements we could be proud of.

More Rain

By October there'd been so much rain that the creek was up and we couldn't get out. We didn't care; we were fine and the pantry was full. Our paddock looked like a lake; the dogs went for a swim and I pretended to be Rex Hunt. We laughed about last year and how everything had been wet and how we'd emptied tarps and used Silastic to seal everything that leaked.

Mud was everywhere and I mean everywhere. Ni'a took the tractor over the creek, followed by Troy in the Land Cruiser so that he'd be able to go to work on the weekend. They came back all smiles. Troy went off on the tractor at 2am through the rising creek. I checked in the daylight and the creek was still rising; maybe he wouldn't be able to cross in the afternoon. It was weather for ducks and new and exciting challenges were upon us, making each day different.

Community Involvement

While all this was happening I have also been a very active member of the Country Women's Association. During the year we presented a bridal show, with antique gowns from all over the state, and an art show. We also catered for private functions and, of course,

sold cakes and preserves on our many stalls. Ni'a is a junior member and Troy does whatever he can to help.

In December and January we ripped out the old kitchen in the CWA hall and prepared it for the new one. That entailed lots of messy work scraping paint off walls, painting walls and sanding the floor. Troy came to the rescue with the sanding; the bag blew twice and dust was everywhere. We are so proud of all the hard work and the new kitchen.

FOLLOW YOUR HEART

We have grown and we have lots of stories to tell as well as a beautiful place to live, which we have made with all our hearts and which we love. There is still a lot of work to do, a room for Ni'a and a verandah to sit under in the heat and, of course, lots of wood to split.

As you can see, we don't sit still; even when it is raining there are jobs to be done. We are not afraid of hard work; it builds character and we have plenty of that as well as imagination, which you need to build your dream. Go and do it for yourself; enjoy the good times and learn by the hard. I hope to have inspired people into joining the ever growing *Grass Roots* family. Have the courage to follow your heart, we did and we have made it with smiles.

See GR 166 for Marlene's article 'Adventurous Bush Living'. ☘

Mosaic of Memories

by Suni Miller, Avenel, Vic.

Wandering into Suzanne Pattison's inner-city courtyard is like suddenly finding yourself in a jungle. The traffic noise disappears and you are surrounded by colourful plants of all shapes and sizes. A close inspection reveals that many of the pots are decorated with mosaics, while the most eye-catching feature is an enormous blue mosaic table, on which Suzanne keeps her bonsai collection.

'I love plants, and even though I don't have any actual dirt at the moment, it hasn't stopped me making a potted garden; I've even got apple and lemon trees. The mosaics are my other addiction: I love the colour they add,



Suzanne's willow pattern planter.



and once I'd done one, I just kept going. They aren't hard, using my method. I call it smash and stick style.'

Suzanne's first mosaic was inspired by hardship. Her father's family has lived on the land near Boort, in hot, dry rural Victoria, for four generations. They run cattle, sheep and goats and grow lucerne, canola, millet, barley and wheat. Little had changed in the 70-year-old weatherboard farmhouse since it was first built. There was certainly never the money for rewiring. A few years ago, her mother woke in the middle of the night and smelled smoke. Suzanne said: 'It was just Mum, Dad and my little brother Will there. No smoke detectors. Dad got up and opened the door of the kitchen and the whole room was in flames. There was no time to grab anything – they got out with their socks and jocks'.

The family stood and watched as the house burned to the ground in 15 minutes, long before fire engines could get there. An electrical fault in the wall was the culprit.

Suzanne said: 'I got the call the next morning and drove up straight away. Nothing was left except the chimney

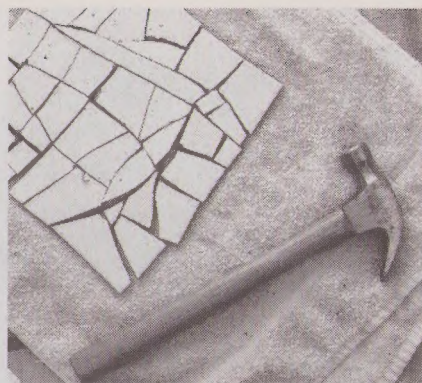
and the bed springs. I couldn't believe my eyes. Where our home used to be there were just ashes. Mum's plates had been stacked in a wooden chest and we found them in a pile. They were brittle and broken from the heat, but we were desperate to salvage anything that had some memories. These were Mum's precious Wedgewood, her wedding plates and our Bunnikins plates from when we were kids. I collected them all up and put them in a tea chest in the shed and forgot about them'.

While her parents were rebuilding, Suzanne trained as a massage therapist then went backpacking. She found herself in Barcelona, where Antonio Gaudí, the Modernist architect, built vivid, unconventional buildings utilising mosaics. 'I saw the Park Güell and I was totally inspired, the gardens were beautiful and the mosaics were amazing, the colour, the form, the ripple and movement, I've never forgotten it.'

When she returned to Australia, Suzanne was champing to have a go and decided to surprise her mum with a mosaic made from the shards she'd kept from the fire. 'I bought a square concrete planter pot and chose a different



Tap tiles gently with a hammer.



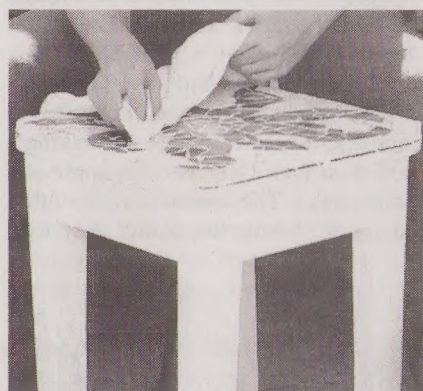
Check the shapes are what you want.



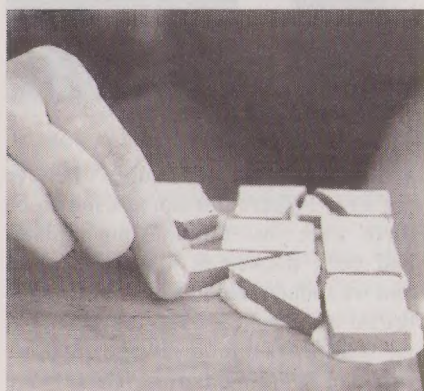
Spread grouting into all the gaps.



Butter adhesive onto back of tile piece.



Polish tiles clean with a rag.



Place them close together.

theme for each side: Bunnikins, blue Wedgewood, pink and green, and finally roses. The plates were easy to break up as the fire had weakened them. I separated them and picked out the best pieces, with the lid from my old jewellery box, which had a pink ceramic ribbon modelled on it, as the centre-piece. Then I fitted the pieces around it like a jigsaw puzzle.' The pot only took a few days to make and Suzanne was pleased with the result.

'I gave it to Mum for Chrissy – she had no idea. She's not a very emotional person, but when she recognised the pieces, memories flooded in and she started telling us what they were all from. She treasures the mosaic as the only thing left from her first 30 years

of marriage. I thought she might grow a plant in it, but she reckons it's too good – she keeps a dried floral arrangement in it and shows it to everyone who visits. It's particularly nice since I don't think their hearts have really been in building the new home after losing the farmhouse.'

Since she'd enjoyed making the planter so much, Suzanne embarked on a mosaic spree. First, she decorated two pots with pieces of Wedgewood willow pattern plates – the op shop lady was devastated when Suzanne told her she planned to smash the plates. Then she wandered into a tile shop to get prices and was given all their throw-out tiles for free – a whole car load. She made a colourful square pot, a ladybird table

top and a mirror frame, each of which took about a day to do, and then embarked on the big project.

'I got a 1 x 2 metre table frame from the op shop for a few bucks, bought some wood and cement sheeting, stuck them together with liquid nails, and drew a design of a wave on it. I wanted a Japanese inspired theme for my bon-sai table and I tiled it in blues – light, royal, navy. It took me six months because it was such a big area. I did a few hours each Sunday, and I reckon setting it up and packing it away again took half the time. It would have been better if I'd had a shed I could leave it up in. I was so happy when I finished. I haven't started another yet – there's no room left out here for any more!'

HOW TO SMASH AND STICK

Materials

- a surface – a pot, a table top, a stool
- PVA glue diluted 1:1 with water
- old towels
- tiles
- hammer
- a design, if desired
- knife and spatula
- tile adhesive (water resistant)
- grout (same colour as tile adhesive)
- a drop sheet
- gloves (tile shards can be sharp)

Method

- Make sure the surface to be mosaiced is clean and dry. Cement, wood and terracotta should be sealed with diluted PVA and left to dry before the mosaic is applied.

- Lay a towel on a hard surface, like a garden path, place a tile on it, and cover with another towel. Smack gently with a hammer, lifting frequently to see what shapes you have created and if you need to tap further.

- If you are making a random jigsaw pattern, you don't need a design. If you have a design in mind, draw it onto the surface of the object to be decorated.

- Using a knife, butter adhesive onto the back of each piece of tile and stick it to the surface. Suzanne either starts in a corner for a jigsaw pattern, or does the design first, then fills in the background. Stick pieces as close as possible, preferably 2 or 3 millimetres apart, which still allows a small space for grout.

- Once all the pieces are stuck on, allow to dry for 24 hours.

- Follow packet directions to mix grout; Suzanne prefers it to be stiffer rather than sloppy. (Make sure grout colour matches adhesive or it could show through.) Spread grout using a spatula or stiff piece of cardboard. Ensure all gaps are filled and edges are neat. Allow to dry for 30 minutes.

- Using old towels, wipe the tile surface to remove excess grout. The grout will still be slightly moist at this time, so take care to leave neat seams of grout finish. Polish with a clean rag.

- Allow it to dry for 24 hours before leaving it outside.

TRY IT YOURSELF

Smash and stick couldn't be more simple, although Suzanne has a few



tips. 'It's easier to use tiles that are the same height if you want an even surface. If using plates, remember they will have curvy bits and won't sit evenly, making them tricky to grout. You should seal the inside of pots before planting in them, and I've found that chipboard is not rainproof. One of my mosaic tables has swollen up in the damp, and I will have to lift the design off it. Also, a square flat surface is definitely the easiest to start with.'

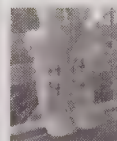
'This style of mosaic is a bit rough and ready. The professionals use tile cutters to get the shapes they want, whereas I like to be inspired by what shapes appear. A small project only takes a day, and mosaics really brighten up the garden. If you choose tiles that have some memories attached to them, you'll treasure the object for life.

To be honest, being a garden person, I look at and enjoy my Wedgewood pot planters much more than I ever would have done the plates.'

Photos by Marcel Aucar. 📷

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Backyard Treasures

by Val Smetheram, Wishart, Qld.

Jazz up your edible plant collection with these unusual favourites from Val's Queensland garden, including a tree that does miracles and a climbing spinach!



Val shows off her rampantly healthy and productive pawpaw tree.

'Have you seen this?' My Asian neighbour waved a plant, complete with trailing roots, over the back fence. 'What is it?' I wanted to know. 'It's a curry plant', she said. 'We used it a lot in Hong Kong. It's easy to grow.' Always interested in new plants, I quizzed her as to its uses and can now share information about it here. As well, I have some other easy-grow, tough and productive favourites that you might find useful.

CURRY LEAF TREE

Kari patha, karapincha or curry leaf tree (*Murraya koenigii*), the gift from my neighbour, is now a graceful rather handsome two metres tall and rising. Looking like a mini palm tree, its attractiveness is a bonus over and above culinary uses. According to my herbal book, it's widely grown and used by the people in Portuguese Goa and grows wild in south-west Asia, from Pakistan and India to Sri Lanka and northern Thailand.

This is the pinnate-leaved curry plant, by the way, not the fine-leaved one (easily identified by the fine silvery-grey leaves like pine needles), which is a much smaller plant that has a milder taste. I use leaves from my plant often to flavour curries, scrambled eggs and vegetables. Used to begin a curry or for lentil dishes, it's fried with dried red chilli and mustard seeds (wait till the mustard seed pops) and I don't think you could improve on it. The smell in the kitchen at that stage gets everyone's juices flowing. Mmmm!

One very surprising piece of information is that kari patha is related to the citrus family and its rootstock can be used to graft a citrus onto. Fresh or dried leaves can be infused in oil for frying or dressings.

The black, shiny, grape-size berries are edible and peppery-tasting, but no further information can I find, even after searching the internet. Does anyone know? The fruits certainly look attractive. There must be even more

uses for such an aromatic plant. I'm open to suggestions.

MIRACLE TREE

The aptly-named miracle tree (*Synsepalum dulcificum*) is one of the most useful and productive items in our backyard. Several times a year it produces a prolific amount of small oval fruits with large stones, which ripen to a bright holly-berry red, shining like miniature glowing coals. They have a curious property that allows you, after eating them, to eat sour fruit such as a lemon without adding sweetening. The normally sour lemon tastes quite sweet. Fascinating! Now shoulder height, the tree lives in a tub at the edge of the patio, seemingly happy with its confined existence.

Miracle trees (they're actually bushes) don't seem to need special care, just a little fertiliser along with the other plants. They don't droop in the very hot weather and fruits are very high in vitamin C. We've had the tree for about five years and it's been fruiting for the last two. At time of purchase they were difficult to find. Now, though, they are much more available and I've seen them in a number of garden centres.

PIMENTO TREE

On one of my 'hunting' expeditions around the nurseries for unusual plants (my long-suffering better half always groans, wondering where he is going to plant my latest treasure) I came across a pimento tree (*Pimenta dioica*), which, of course, I just had to have. One sniff of the bruised leaf, which smells strongly of three spices (cloves, cinnamon and nutmeg) and he was convinced too.

The tree is now about shoulder height and seems to grow well enough here, though as yet it has not flowered or fruited. The leaves are just superb to flavour winter milk puddings and I guess you can use it anywhere you would use those spices. I often grab a leaf on my way out to enjoy the spicy aroma, which incidentally lasts for hours. Try bruising a couple of leaves and placing them in your pocket when starting on a journey . . . just wonderful! I gave some to a friend at the beginning of a long car trip and, although notorious for succumbing to



Not surprisingly, the leaves of Val's curry tree are terrific in curries and lentil dishes.

travel sickness, she sniffed the bruised leaf often during the ride and didn't feel sick at all. Pimento doesn't seem to have any special requirements except regular watering of course, though is unlikely to be happy in areas where there are frosts. It's had no fancy treatment here and is thriving.

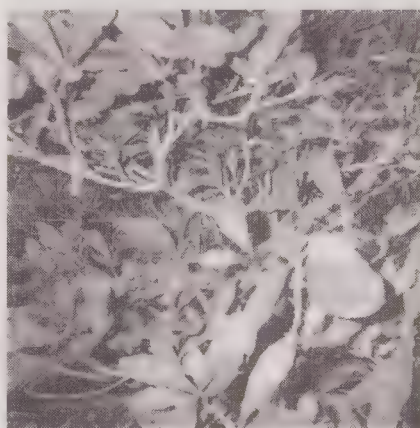
MALABAR SPINACH

Finally, although there are more plants I could mention, I must share how very useful a climbing spinach is. Malabar spinach (*Basella rubra*) will climb over a fence or trellis, or will act as a ground cover if no support is available. It's one of those hardy always-there plants and always seems to be lush and shiny green. It's indifferent to soil too, I think, as dropped seeds seem to germinate all over the place. The taste is different

from that of spinach, but is pleasant and very acceptable as a green and particularly useful in stir-fries. Seeds are easily available from any of the heritage seed companies. Once you have some in your garden you'll always have it, plus heaps of seeds to share.

SO MUCH TO LEARN

These are all such useful plants and so valuable to have in your backyard when you're cooking. There's so much to learn about this planet's flora and its uses, I don't think I could ever get tired of the quest for new information. I have my father to thank for instilling the enthusiasm of growing things. He couldn't have given me a greater gift; I've found it totally absorbing and a lifelong interest. Successful gardening to all those like-minded souls out there. 🌱



Miracle berries change your taste buds.



Climbing malabar spinach.

Childbirth Without Fear

by Heather Kozak, Dellicknora, Vic.

I've had personal experience of two wonderful births, both occurring in hospitals but without medical intervention (or interference). I wanted them to be as natural and self-sufficient as possible, something I achieved as much through good luck as good management. Pregnancy and childbirth hold a certain risk, so even the best-laid plans can go awry, as mine did, but I still created the most natural environment I could for the two tiny folks I brought into our world. My story and advice are based on my own individual experiences and may differ from the unique journeys of others, so use only what suits you and feels safe and comfortable.

I had my heart set on a home-birth when I became pregnant with my first child nearly 12 years ago, but there were no midwives available within a 200-kilometre radius of our remote rural home. I didn't feel confident enough as a first-time parent to risk speeding along unsealed winding roads in the throes of labour if something wasn't right, so opted to use a country town hospital as my base.

THE BIRTH PLAN

I designed and wrote a detailed birth plan that would make clear to maternity staff what I wanted and, more importantly, what I didn't want: no drugs, inducement, Caesarean section or epidural. Many how-to-have-a-baby books include a template of a birth plan, but a simple, clear hand-written document serves just as well. I specified choices such as wanting the opportunity to breastfeed immediately after birth, keeping my newborn with me after birth, having my husband present and actively involved, and being able to be active and move around during labour. Try not to be inflexible about your plans to the point of endangering yourself or your child. If medical intervention is necessary, it doesn't mean that you have failed, simply that you have adapted to circumstances.



SETTING THE STAGE

People seem to be more interested in things that go wrong than in things that go right. Time and again I have been present when mature women were relating gruesome birth stories. Each seemed to try to outdo the others in stories of lengthy labours, unimaginable agony, number of stitches and so on. Impressionable young women and teenagers sat there listening in horror to these tales. I'm sure that the thought-bubbles over their heads (if they were cartoons) would each contain the same words: I'm never having a baby!

Those instilled fears could come back to haunt young women as they prepare for their own act of giving birth. I believe that fear interferes with the natural and wonderful privilege of childbirth and can cause the very problems that the person was scared of in the first place. I urge all mothers to present a positive view of childbirth to the young, even if they were unfortunate and had a difficult time. What I experienced was not pain, but effort and endurance, and there are several factors that contributed to this.

PREPARATION

A good birth book with a very healthy dose of humour (Kaz Cooke's *Up The Duff*, for example) is a great source of practical information and reassurance. Too much negative information will reinforce fears, so be selective. Knowing what was happening physiologically helped me to work with my body and not against it. Being overweight makes any physical activity more difficult, so try to avoid eating for two, or three, and maintain a reasonable level of fitness throughout pregnancy.

In Western society we tend to sit on chairs and toilets instead of squatting, so our ligaments and muscles are not as long as they could be. I countered this by having very low stools around my house, so I could be reading or peeling spuds while stretching at the same time. I was then able to give birth to my daughter while in a squatting position (one of the best birthing positions as it creates openness and utilises gravity), supported from behind by my husband, and with a mirror positioned so I could see her head crowning.

Staying flexible and open was very important to me, so I practised yoga before, during and after my pregnancies. A good yoga instructor will be able to guide you regarding duration of poses and appropriate positions, or there are specific books about yoga in pregnancy. I found it to be a gentle and safe form of exercise and the poses designed to promote an easy birth worked exceptionally well. I used yogic breathing and meditation to work through the stages of birth and remained focused, happy, calm and able to enjoy the process that leads to a beautiful human being entering our world.

How different my script was from the Hollywood version where the heroines scream and wail. Better keep those movies away from the young 'uns too! Tai chi and Pilates also complement pregnancy, so look around and find something that suits your lifestyle.

THE WELL

During my births I drew on my own personal 'well' of fortitude and endurance to ease the challenging stages and give me the energy to keep going. Everyone's well will be filled by different experiences: problems they have overcome, challenges they have met, fears they have conquered, joys they have brought. I drew on such experiences as going bushwalking and mountain scaling with my very fit husband, getting to the point where I felt too tired to go a step further, but still having to keep going to get home. These reserves are what you draw on because you know you achieved something difficult in the past, you have had practice at not giving up, and you have hidden reserves of strength that you can trust. If you don't think your well is full enough of these experiences, perhaps before becoming pregnant you could challenge yourself in ways that will give you mental strength and emotional endurance.

WHEN THE WHEELS FALL OFF

Seven months into my second pregnancy I was just starting to think about writing my birth plan when my waters broke. Oops! There was no bag packed, no comforting music or frozen apple juice to take into a lovely birthing unit (some hospitals have a motel-style room with double bed and shower). I drove to my little country hospital and was then transported by ambulance to Canberra, while my husband was collecting our daughter from school.

Doctors assured me that my premature labour could be halted, but a wise older nurse who had seen it all predicted that I would be having this baby tonight. She was right, and warned me that my baby was in breech position and might have to be delivered by emergency Caesarean. I put my case to her that I could cope with a tricky birth and would prefer natural to medically assisted if possible, and she worked with me. I delivered my tiny 1500-gram boy the old-fashioned way. The breech position was not a problem because he was so small.

Little Max was whisked away to the neonatal intensive care unit, hotly pursued by me once I was cleaned up. The place looked like the bridge on the

Starship Enterprise with monitors, flashing lights and beeps and high-tech equipment everywhere. It was sterile and alien to me, but all I could really see was my little baby. He had tubes and wires attached to him, but they were invisible to my daughter when she and her dad arrived. 'Oh, how cute', was all she said. Children have such a wondrous ability to see past the paraphernalia to the real issues. I overheard a little boy, who was visiting his new baby and staring round-eyed at the humidicribs, ask 'Are they baby factories?'

KANGAROO CARE

How could I be true to my principles in such an environment? I must have been blessed with insightful nurses because the one assigned to Max told me about kangaroo care straight away. Kangaroo care was developed in New Guinea, where a shortage of humidicribs had meant that multiple babies were being housed in the same one, leading to cross infections and other problems. The humidicribs maintain temperature, which premature babies are unable to do, so some bright spark worked out that a baby laid skin-to-skin on its mother's chest could have its temperature maintained, with the additional benefits of hearing and feeling the mother's heartbeat as it would have done in the womb it had left too early.

I leapt at the opportunity to try this, and was given a hospital gown to put on back-to-front so the opening was at the front. I had nothing on underneath, and Max was only wearing a nappy and a beanie that would have fitted a large orange. The nurse placed him on my chest and covered us with warm blankets. Bliss! For the first time since that sudden birth I felt like a real mother, and had a long and bonding cuddle with my little man. Fathers can do this too. I still get a lump in my throat to remember the enormous Maori man who sat with his tiny daughter down the front of his shirt while his sick wife was too ill to be able to. The monitors that our babies were attached to proved how effective 'kangarooing' was. As soon as Max was installed in my pouch his blood oxygen, heart rate and breathing levels all improved dramatically, as did my state of mind.

Because of this closeness and



connection we were very successful in establishing breastfeeding, and I was recommending this natural method to all and sundry. I spent every waking minute of the next month with Max down my shirt, oblivious to the hospital bustle around us, sharing the intimate and silent conversation between parent and child. Every newborn can share kangaroo care with their parents, not just the fragile and early-bird ones. It is incredibly comforting for a fretful baby who has reflux or is teething and gives so much back to the 'kangaroo' as well.

How To Kangaroo

Wear front-opening clothing with no bra. Add a blanket around your shoulders or a front-opening jumper if the weather is cold.

Don't use perfumes, deodorants or chemicals on your skin. Newborns have a very sensitive sense of smell and want only your natural scent.

Place baby upright, chest to chest and skin to skin, high enough on your chest to make eye contact.

Relax and enjoy.

POSTSCRIPT

Max is now six years old and is a brilliant, happy boy. He was breastfed until the age of three and seems particularly fond of the kangaroos that frequent our paddocks . . . I wonder why! ♡



BUYING A PROPERTY

by Ken Moore, Glamorgan Vale, Qld.

Before retiring from a job in Brisbane to a hobby farm in the country, as I described to you last time, I used a checklist to assist in the search for a property and to compare those we inspected. The more properties you inspect the harder it is to objectively compare them without some form of recorded notes.

The list is intended for the physical inspection by the buyer. Remember that some aspects such as mining leases, easements, future public works and liens may not become obvious until a thorough search is made of the title and public records as part of a conveyancing process. I used a professional for the sale conveyancing.

This list worked well for me in south-east Queensland, but will not be adequate for other parts of Australia. A prudent approach would be to extract any relevant points you hadn't thought of and then draw up a list for your particular needs in your own area. The aim of such a list is to organise your thoughts about the property being inspected, its potential, its limitations, its suitability for the intended purpose, and how it compares with the others inspected. My list is slanted towards 'good water' as this is a very important criterion for me.

In compiling your personal list you might need to leave several lines of space for some headings to write in relevant information.

INSPECTION CHECKLIST

DESCRIPTION AND PRICE

Address
Area
Acres/hectares
Real property description
Owner sale or agency/salesperson
Contact number
Copy of property plan and surrounding lots available?
Where property was advertised
Asking price \$. . .
Per acre/hectare price \$. . .
Estimate land \$. . .
Estimate improvements \$. . .
Sale inclusions (WIWO, implements, animals, crops, vehicles, machinery, contracts)
Sale exclusions (crop taken off)
Any special vendor terms (take trade, long settlement, owner finance, lease back, after-sale help)
Vendor willingness to negotiate (urgency of sale?)

LOCATION ANALYSIS

Local council name

Zoning by local council
Any special zoning (dog zone, racing precinct)
Distance to town a
Distance to town b
Distance of entry from public bitumen road
Distance of entry from good gravel road
Access from road to house/house site, length
Description of road (all weather, 4WD, good gravel, rough, unmade)
Distance to near neighbour
Distance to coast

LAND TENURE, HOLDING COST

Number of titles
title 1 . . . acres/ha
title 2 . . . acres/ha etc
Type of title
title 1
title 2 . . . etc
Disclosed covenants, easements, future resumptions, liens, claims, mining leases
State government valuation \$. . .

Disclosed rates, council fees, land taxes \$. . .

LAND ANALYSIS

Description (percentage rolling, hilly, steep, flat, swamp, water-course, flooded, arable, cultivated)
Elevation above sea (high plateau, low flats)
Soil type(s)
Soil depth
Native pasture type(s) and percentage
Improved pasture type(s) and percentage
Type of tree cover and percentage
Cultivation area
Type of crops
Tree corridors, shelter belts
Typical native animals, animal habitats
Contours
Landcare
Present land use
Recent past land use
Neighbours' land use (dairies, hobby farm, cattle, sheep, squab pigeons)
Good country?

WATER AND CLIMATE

Annual rain . . . mm
Main season of rain
Number of winter frosts per year
Typical extremes of temperature
Water evaporation rates
Days of sunshine
Winds
Type of public reticulated water (nil, rural, mains pressure, trickle pressure)
Surface water (permanent river, seasonal creek, dams, permanent springs, drought performance)
Underground bores (number, depth, equipped/unequipped, water quality, drought performance)
If no bores, indications of underground water (divined, neighbouring bores, vegetation growth, soaks)
House water, house pressure pumps, roof tanks, gravity feed
Irrigation lines and equipment, troughs, trickle watering
Windmills, pumps
Good water for house and agriculture, animals, garden?

IMPROVEMENTS, RESOURCES

Type and condition of main house
Type and condition of second house
Orientation of house(s) to NE, views, wind
Or suitable home site(s)
Garages, sheds, tack room, silos, fuel store
Animal sheds, yards, stables, pens, crushes, loading ramps, bails, dairies, dips
Chook yards, aviaries, kennels, other animal accommodation
Garden, greenhouse, hydroponics, mushroom set-up
Orchards, fruit trees, plantations, vineyards
Organic certification, history of herbicide/pesticide use
Historic site, indigenous cultural site, any heritage listing (house, vegetation)
Any unusual features (rare species, caves, bunkers, rainforest, waterfalls)
Property fenced?
Number of paddocks
Condition of external fences and number of strands

Any obvious external fence deviation from survey alignment (away from survey pegs, around obstacles, through watercourses, around steep inclines, doglegs)
Condition of internal fences and number of strands
Any special-purpose fencing (deer, goats, dog-proof, horses) or netting (hail, anti-bird)
Grids, gates
Use of or potential for alternative energy use (wind, solar, grid feed-back)
Potential to use resources on property to develop property (mudbrick, rocks, manure for garden, timber for construction, logs for fence posts, bee sites)
Resources with potential for sale (gravel, sand, mineral water, timber, fodder, firewood)
Resale potential (subdivision, growth corridor, close to new infrastructure, new jobs, new development)
Immediate and mid-term improvements needed to make the property suitable for intended purpose and provide good water

LIFESTYLE AND SERVICES

Water (see above)
Power
Phone
Sewerage
Years away, distance away, cost of installation for each if not there
Mail
Rubbish collection
Other deliveries
Mobile phone signal
Radio stations
TV stations
Cable TV, satellite dish
Distance from important amenities (town, shops, school, school bus, public transport, ambulance, sports club, hospital, doctor, dentist, produce agency, vet)
Possible on-farm recreation
Possible off-farm recreation in the area
Ease of visits to and by friends and relatives
Comment on natural living, ambience, security, quietness

POTENTIAL NEGATIVES

Asbestos or lead paint in house or outbuildings
DDT, organocompounds, toxic wastes, toxic water, heavy metals, cyanide, old dips, old munitions, treated posts, old tips, batteries, rubbish
Pest animals (dingoes, foxes, feral dogs, pigs, rabbits, hares)
Land weeds, water weeds or algae, pest trees
Pest insects (ticks, termites, fruit fly, buffalo fly, bush flies, locusts)
Disease outbreaks, quarantine zone, movement restrictions, tree dieback
Erosion, land slips, siltation, retained vegetation on hills and watercourses
Salinity, acid soils, soil deficits
Agricultural spray drifts, smells, dust
Noise (planes, traffic, trains, close neighbours, close kennels)
Underground mines, tunnels, holes, mining leases, quarries, open-cuts
Flooding, flood levels, any flood maps of area
Ionising and electromagnetic radiation, high voltage lines
Bushfires, forested slopes, fire fuel buildup, trees or grass close to buildings
Restrictions on land clearing, dam building, pumping rights, altering structures

POST-INSPECTION

Talk to, check with, do search of, get inspection of, read up about, get map of . . .
Any contract would require clause(s) about . . .

OVERALL SUITABILITY

Here's where you try to summarise all of the above, put it together with your emotive response to the property (some properties just don't grab you and others immediately steal your heart), and compare it to others you have looked at.

Have fun searching and very best of luck and joy with your new lifestyle. ☘

Birth Of A Dexter Calf

by Barbara Fulham, Tallebudgera, Qld.

It goes against the grain for me to call the vet every time one of my cows has a problem. It's probable I grew up with this attitude because I was the only girl child in my family and Dad taught me independence and practical ways along with my brothers. I have found most problems I bump my head on can be solved by getting up and getting into it.

Thinking of my childhood and its effects on me, I'm reminded of the wooden boards with sage advice etched on them that my mother nailed to trees all over our New England property. It sticks with you when you see words like: 'What is this life if full of care, we have no time to sit and stare – up and be doing!' shining out at you from a tree glistening with snow. Another I remember fondly was: 'God helps those who help themselves'. No wonder it goes against the grain to ask for help.

On my little farm up in the hills I have had as many as 12 Dexter cattle, which is more than five acres can support. I am supposed to sell the little sweeties, but sometimes it is hard when you have helped them into the world. I did bite the bullet not long ago and sold five, which left me with only four, one of which is a black short-leg heifer. Having got her in calf last year to an English bull named Cornair Outlaw, I waited impatiently for the birth.

After I'd helped the heifer, named Sabrina, through the hottest week ever by spraying water on her frequently and finding her special cool places to stand, she waited until the heaviest rain we've had in years to begin calving. While other ladies my age were sheltering from the rain and enjoying fashion parades and pancakes, I sat on a bucket in a teeming paddock encouraging the new mum-to-be in her efforts. The rain up here on Tallebudgera Ridge sheets off the surrounding hills and hits our north-east slope in torrents. As streamlets build up they pick up the beautiful red soil

and become as orange as carrot juice; believe me I know – I was in it and got to see it close up.

This was Sabrina's first calf, so I didn't expect things to happen fast. However, the first five hours were just the beginning. She strained and the rain rained and I changed shirts and hats and jackets, but nothing productive was happening.

It goes against the grain to call the vet, but this was beginning to appear different from any of the many other calvings I'd attended. I made a decision: I'd stop trying to be *au naturel* and let her calve in the great outdoors; I would get her up the hill into the barn and if there was great need for a vet, I would have a dry place, lights and mod cons for the event.

If you've never led a rotund black cow up a hill in thunder and rain with a rest every five minutes for a labour contraction, you just haven't lived! We did finally make it into the barn and dry straw. Labour really started then. When birthing is intense nature makes sure that a cow doesn't do much moving around, so she lay and pushed and I did very little but make soothing noises and in my mind go through the various reasons why no sign of a calf was forthcoming.

My usual calving experience is that the calf dives out into the world, not unlike a child off a diving board. Both front hooves are pointed up under the chin, and the nose and dainty hooves, and sometimes a tiny protruding tongue, are the first things you see peeking coyly out.

Unfortunately, this was not the case with Sabrina. If it was an entirely bad presentation, should I call the vet? No, not yet; it goes against the grain.

Finally, with me straddling the back end of the prone cow and her pushing frantically, I found a hoof, hooray! But wait, two hooves now, but where was the little head and tongue? Upside down and facing back it was soon apparent. So, left hand grasping two



slippery little hooves and right hand trying to get a hold on a tiny head to spin it around at the right moment, I found I couldn't hold the nose. I at last remembered a vet I had read about in a book who had tied a string behind an unborn calf's teeth to aid in pulling it around. I could get my two fingers in that tiny mouth. Yes, the tongue gave an encouraging wiggle as I held onto the surprisingly sharp teeth and miniature jaw with all my might. Each mighty push by the cow aided the turn around and down and finally everybody was in the right position for the last great push. Out he came. I pulled and pulled until he was in my lap. It seemed at the time that he was as long, straggly, wet and flattened as a blanket from an old-time mangle. Dragging him up to his mum's head I was rewarded with the contented sound of a mother cow's first moo to her new baby. Suddenly it was over. Up she got, immediately washing and washing her calf and singing and mooing. Soon the little wet bundle was struggling to his feet and all was well. I told my cow that her baby's name was Shannon per order of the grandkids, and I imagined that she looked pleased.

I spent the next day moving very slowly since every muscle seemed to be sore from mentally and actually assisting in the birth. Didn't need the vet, thank goodness, 'cause it goes against the grain. ☘

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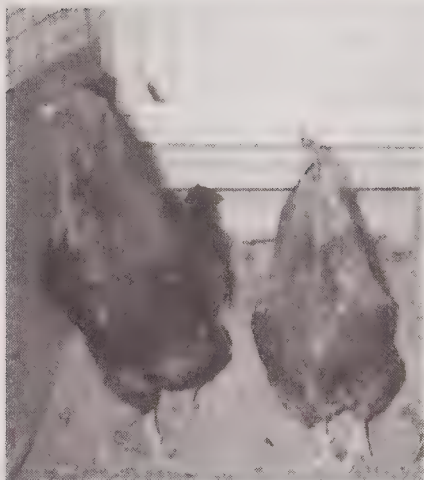
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New Hampshire Red

by Megg Miller, Nagambie, Vic.



If you're considering chooks for your self-sufficiency set-up, take a long look at the New Hampshire Red. It is a medium-sized bird, lays well and looks good. It is a breed developed solely for the commercial market and not aimed in any way for the fancier. Initially this breed was used to service a demand in 1920s New York for winter and early spring table fowl, and then was successfully combined with Cornish Game in the development of early broilers. The strains surviving in Australia today may not be quite as well fleshed and fast-growing as the New Hampies of the middle decades of the 20th century, but they will be keen foragers, hardy, and true dual-purpose birds.

Don't recall ever seeing a New Hampshire Red? Maybe you're even thinking we're geographically challenged and have confused ourselves when in fact we meant the Rhode Island Red. No, the New Hampshire Red is a recognised American breed, but was a late starter as far as pure-breeds go, being accepted into the *American Standard of Perfection* in 1935. This makes it one of the last chicken breeds to be included. By this time emphasis on the economic properties of fowls had led commercial and fancy breeders down totally different paths, so the New Hampie was never promoted for its aesthetic features. The breed was of little interest to the show fraternity back then and has continued to maintain a low profile as an exhibition bird.

Our Australian stock all goes back to a couple of importations of fertile eggs in the mid 1940s. In 1948 quarantine measures were put in place for the permanent prohibition of imported avian eggs and stock, thereby preventing further New Hampie genetics coming in. Despite this small beginning, Aussie poultry newspapers were carrying advertisements for stock by 1949 and publishing the details of the breed standard so their readers knew what the breed looked like. This

emphasis on physical appearance was an irony really because one of the key people working to develop and distribute the breed in New Hampshire, Professor 'Red' Richardson, was renowned for his response to criticisms of the breed's appearance, saying, 'I'm not interested in the colour of the birds, I'm interested in the colour of the money they make!'

WHY A SECOND RED BREED?

Rhode Island Reds had held sway since introduced to the American poultry public in 1904. In the decades following they were popular on farms where a dual-purpose bird was preferred to the laying Leghorn. A dual-purpose bird didn't only bring in the dollars from egg sales, but also from the cockerels hatched, and Rhodie males, although slow-growing, could be finished as a large-bodied table bird. There was much demand too for specimens of this breed for the show bench. If the Rhodie was doing so well, why was a second red-plumaged breed developed?

The fowl kept in New Hampshire had derived from Rhode Island Red stock and initially there was no plan to breed away from them and form a distinctly different bird. But the farmers in New Hampshire selected for hardiness, fertility, rapid growth and fast feathering. This intensive process resulted in an earlier maturing bird than the Rhode Island Red, with a shorter but deeper, broader body. The biggest difference was the lower cost to farmers of getting birds to despatch age.

It was commonly believed that the preoccupation of many breeders with the Rhodie's plumage colour was at the expense of carcass traits. Part of the New Hampie's success was due to savvy breeders being prepared to adopt disease control programs and dietary recommendations that were revolutionary back then. The breed later featured in the genetics of some of the largest broiler breeding companies in the US

and it could be claimed that the colour of the money they helped breeders earn was not only the preferred hue, but often ran into millions.

QUALITIES TODAY

Don't expect the specimens around today to be as vigorous or fast-growing as the American birds of yesteryear. Starting from a small gene pool means stock is fairly inbred. This needn't be an insurmountable problem if selection for utility properties is rigorously carried out. Several old-timers who were still breeding in the 1990s did select for early maturity and egg lay and left a useful legacy for current breeders to build upon.

RECOGNISING NEW HAMPSHIRE

You cannot confuse New Hampies with Rhode Island Reds; the latter have a noticeably long, level back, giving them a shape that is akin to a brick. Plumage colour is a dark, rich, almost chocolate red. New Hampies have a medium-length back that sweeps up to the tail. Their body length is shorter than the Rhodie, and the shape is quite broad, deep and well rounded. Overall, the New Hampie is a more rounded looking bird.

Plumage colour is chestnut red, brighter and more brilliant on the male and tending to medium shades of chestnut on the female. Both sexes have lustrous black on tail feathers and the females display black tipping on their neck hackle. Bright yellow legs complement the gold sheen on neck hackles and the male's saddle.

The New Hampie is medium sized, with weights for adult birds around

3.85 kilograms for roosters and 2.95 kilograms for hens.

KEEPING NEW HAMPSHIRE

The hardest work with this breed isn't caring for them, but finding a breeder. They are an active breed so do very well on free range, but cope with confinement provided they have some grain in the litter to scratch for and greens to maintain the yellow leg colour and keep them busy. Expect fertility to be good, but hens may not always go broody and raise young. Apparently New Hampies that have been infused with Rhode Island Red bloodlines (a practice not uncommon when inbreeding becomes problematic) are very inclined to broodiness compared to those of purer genetics. Eggs have tinted shells and are a good size.

As a dual-purpose bird, which the breed is today, you can expect reasonable egg lay and an early maturing, nicely shaped table bird. If you were serious about putting lots of birds in the freezer, a cross of New Hampie rooster over Light Sussex hens would result in a top table bird, with the added benefits of hybrid vigour (from the crossbreeding) and chicks that could be sexed after hatching from their down colour. The pullets would display buff feathering and the cockerels white or silver. For autosexing,



the rooster must be red; the process does not work if a white or silver male is used.

A NO-NONSENSE BIRD

Whether you keep New Hampshire Reds pure or create a meat cross, you are bound to be happy with the breed. It is interesting that they were not only an outstanding bird up until the modern, multi-bred hybrids were developed, but their genes are still present in some of the successful hybrids today. Perhaps more early breeders should have aimed for a no-nonsense bird.

OBTAINING STOCK

Your best bet is to approach local poultry clubs and ask for assistance in locating breeders, as there isn't a breed club or society for New Hampshire Red. 🐔

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Old-Time Bush Remedies

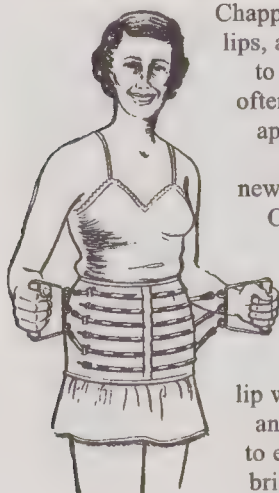
by Vance Avenel, Bundaberg, Qld.

Common household substances were once called into daily use for injuries that are now regularly treated with costly medications. These treatments from yesteryear are interesting for the glimpses they give us into times past, and some are just as useful and relevant today.

IODINE

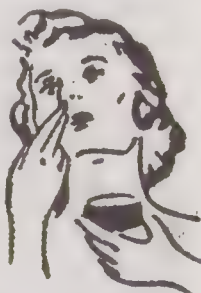
Farm workers often found that minor abrasions on shins and arms became infected from exposure to manure-contaminated dust and rapidly broke out into seeping ulcerations. Ointments merely melted, and the self-same dust rapidly stuck to them, further aggravating the infection. Bandages were ineffective: the wrappings dried, then stuck, and tore the damaged flesh every time they were changed, further exacerbating the problem. The solution was a simple application of old-fashioned black iodine, liberally applied beyond the edges of the infection. While the iodine was still a wet pool on the sore, it was covered with a generous application of prickly heat powder. This soon consolidated into a dry, antiseptic, protective scab, which kept the flies at bay, did not need daily removal, and could be patched as need be until healing was completed.

EGGSHELL MEMBRANE



Chapped and cracked lips, awkward things to medicate, were often treated by the application of the inner skin of a newly cracked egg. Carefully peeled from the inside shell, the unbroken skin was applied to the lip while still fresh, and smoothed out to exclude air. In a brief time it dried,

moulding itself firmly into an antiseptic no-cost dressing. This same naturally self-adhesive patch was used on other difficult-to-bandage portions of the human anatomy to exclude minor open sores from insect attention.



APPLE CIDER VINEGAR

Apple cider vinegar, particularly when combined with other natural additives, is nearly a one-bottle medicine cabinet in itself. A teaspoon of honey dissolved in a glass of well-chilled water with a substantial splash of cider vinegar added made a delightful drink that was also credited with aiding digestion. To treat itchy rashes a spoonful or two of straight cider vinegar would be poured into cupped hands and applied gently several times a day. It would sting for a few moments, then bring blessed relief.

The old folk always spoke of cider vinegar being the best remedy in numerous situations. Citrus fruit is loaded with nutrients proclaimed as healants. Thus, a favoured brew was near enough equal parts of chopped up whole lemons (skin, pulp and seeds), and sometimes garlic, added to cider vinegar. The mixture was sealed in a bottle and left to marinate for two weeks. Gently applied to rashes and chaffed areas, it quickly soothed the irritation and was dabbed on frequently during the day for relief from the discomfort.

METHYLATED SPIRITS

A similar concoction to the cider vinegar and citrus blend, using methylated spirits (externally only) instead of vinegar, was regarded as equally beneficial when dealing with open wounds or sores. The same process of repeated

applications was followed.

It was a common evening sight on sheep stations to see workers marinating their hands in bowls of hot water purple with Condyl's crystals. This strange ritual was to kill infections; it was followed by soaking the hands in methylated spirits to harden them against the rigors of the next day's run.

ONION

Mouldy onion was once a common treatment for infections, and was widely used in the emergency treatment of battlefield injuries during World War II in both Europe and the Pacific.

COBWEB

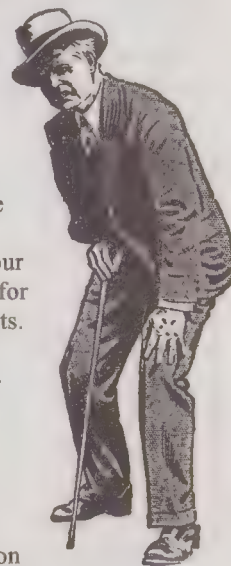
A handful of fresh spider cobwebs placed across a cut was said to halt bleeding from minor injuries, in much the same fashion as the scrap of tissue paper used by blokes who nick themselves while shaving.

TURPENTINE

What bush worker did not inadvertently spend far too long exposed to the sun and turn an embarrassing, not to mention painful, pink? Burnt areas would be gently dabbed with mineral turpentine. Once the volatile elements had swiftly evaporated, an oily residue remained that soon soothed.

SALT

Modern medicine is vocal in condemning salt in our diets, blaming it for numerous ailments. However, for countless generations salt was a highly prized resource, often available only to the wealthy and, in pre-refrigeration





days, it was the only means of preserving meat for any length of time. Even in recent decades, out

in bush camps, fresh meat was dry-salted and hung in flour sacks from a shady tree limb. This salty meat was eaten without serious problems to the bush consumers, who usually lived on it for many years and often left this world bound for the pearly gates either due to old age or because of physical injuries. Among hard-working, free-sweating workers such as shearers, who all day crouched over an endless string of struggling sheep under a hot iron roof, the bottle of salt tablets with which to stave off salt and mineral depletion was regarded as being as essential to their wellbeing as trousers and boots.

NATIVE TREE OILS

It would be difficult to state which of

our native tree leaf oils is the most useful, as tea tree oil and eucalyptus oil are both in frequent use. Applied liberally to a tissue placed inside your pillow case, eucalyptus oil will help clear nasal passages and enhance your chances of a restful night's sleep. Tea tree oil is a great disinfectant used in the treatment of rashes, sores and minor cuts and abrasions. Both oils were widely used in shearing sheds to doctor the painful inflammation caused by sharp Bathurst and Noogoora burrs embedded in the sheep's fleece.

The bush remedies were basic by necessity, but this made them easier to come by and keep. Who's for an eggshell membrane or cobweb. 🐼

AVOCADOS ARE ACE

Avocados protect the body against increases in blood sugar levels after meals, so are great for diabetics. Avocados are also terrific during pregnancy, with an average sized fruit containing up to 160 micrograms of folate. 🐼

DOCOSAHEXAENOIC ACID

Australians are only consuming about a quarter of the recommended intake of DHA, the brain-building, heart protective fat. Good sources include deep-sea fish, organ meats and eggs. 🐼

CANCER INFLUENCE

A study of 44,788 pairs of twins conducted by scientists in Sweden, Denmark and Finland found that environmental influences and lifestyle choices are more likely to determine cancer risk than genetic inheritance. Prostate cancer was most likely to be inherited for 42 percent, but on average genetic factors account for 30 percent of cancers. The balance of cancer risk has more to do with eating habits, smoking, drinking and environment. 🐼

OSTEOPOROSIS

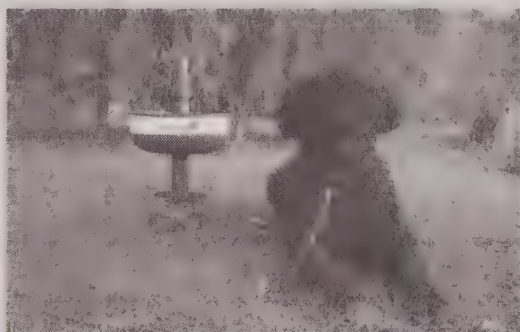
A 12-year health study found that women drinking three or more glasses of milk a day had no reduction in their risk of hip or arm fractures, compared to those who drank little or none. 🐼



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Try Alpaca Fleece

by Mary Horsfall, Euroa, Vic.

Not so very long ago alpacas were a novelty and the sight of these beautiful gentle creatures in a paddock was enough to make you stop the car for a better look. Alpacas have grown in popularity to the stage that products made from their fleece are commercially available and the fleeces themselves are not hard to come by for those who enjoy spinning and knitting.

FEATURES OF THE FLEECE

The most noticeable quality of alpaca fleece is its softness. What isn't so apparent at first sight is that the fleece has very high tensile strength, three times that of Merino. In addition, the fibre structure has no barbs, as are found on wool, meaning that people who find that wool irritates their skin are more likely to be able to comfortably wear alpaca garments. Alpaca fleece is light but extremely warm, it has a beautiful lustre and garments made from it don't pill. The colour range is another feature that sets alpaca

apart from other fibres. There are said to be 22 natural fleece colours encompassing white; shades of fawn; shades of brown, including a red-brown; grey shades, including rose greys and lavender greys; and the very unusual true blue-black.

There are two fleece types: Huacaya and Suri. The Huacaya, the predominant type in Australia, is similar in appearance to Merino fleece and feels soft and warm to the touch. Huacaya fleece comes in a wide variety of colours and is mostly used for knitted garments. The Suri fleece looks like dreadlocks and has a soft, but silky and cool feel. Suri fleece available in Australia has been predominantly white, but breeders are introducing the same range of colours as Huacaya fleece. Commercially, Suri fleece is used to make mock fur or manufactured into high-class worsted fabrics for men's suits.

Alpaca fleece blends extremely well with wool, mohair, silk and cotton. It spins up beautifully and also felts well,



though not as well as wool. Its warmth and light weight make it an exceptional filling for doonas.

SPINNING ALPACA

Alpaca fleece gives a very high percentage yield, as much as 97 percent, which means more lovely yarn can be spun from the fleece with less wastage than is common with wool.

The fleece is no more difficult than wool to spin, and can be used with the minimal preparation of just teasing it out with the fingers. As with all fleeces, though, good preparation makes spinning easier and results in a better quality yarn, so wash and comb or card the fleece if you desire a fine, even yarn.

You might need to give the yarn slightly more twist than is needed for wool. Keep the tension on your wheel the same as for spinning wool, though this might have to be adjusted to suit the speed at which you work: fast spinners can tighten the tension, slow spinners might need to loosen it. You'll soon work out what is comfortable for yourself.

Alpaca lends itself to spinning very fine yarn, three ply or less, which knits up into lovely lacy patterns. Even three ply yarn is known for its warmth, but

Sustainable Alpacas

Ease of care is a prominent reason given by many people for keeping alpacas. They are intelligent and usually of a docile temperament that makes them easy to handle, thus being suitable for inexperienced landowners. Another attraction is that alpacas require minimal husbandry. Flystrike is virtually unknown, so there is no need for mulesing or crutching. Internal parasites are rare because alpacas have the handy habit of leaving their dung in piles that they do not graze near; this makes the dung easily accessed for the compost heap

as well. Footrot is not a concern because they have padded feet rather than hooves. Alpaca pads exert less pressure on the soil than do the feet of kangaroos, making alpacas more environmentally sustainable than any other livestock.

The Australian Alpaca Association Inc is a not-for-profit association with the aim of promoting and developing alpacas as a viable, sustainable primary industry. Readers wishing to know more about the benefits of keeping alpacas can contact the Association on: 03-9873-7700, or look at the website: www.alpaca.asn.au

the fleece can be spun into an eight or twelve ply equivalent when super cosiness is needed.

If you decide to wash the fleece before spinning, use Calgon water conditioner in lukewarm water, not hot, and handle it gently. After spinning wash the hanks in a combination hair shampoo and conditioner in just warm water.

KNITTING TIPS

Alpaca doesn't have the same elasticity as wool so it's a good idea to choose knitting patterns suitable for cotton yarn. To ensure ribbing bands remain firm, work in fine hat elastic when knitting. Picot edges are especially pretty on garments for little girls, otherwise hem garments at the bottom to compensate for the lack of elasticity.

GARMENT CARE

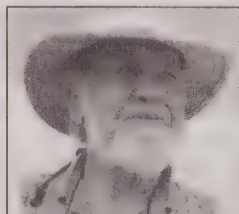
Wash garments with care, the same as you would for wool, and they will last for decades. Handle them under water, lifting out of the water will cause stretching. A clever trick is to put the garment in a plastic basket inside the tub of washing water. Roll washed garments



in a towel to press out as much water as possible and lie them flat to dry. Advice from an experienced textile craftswoman says not to wash garments that have been dry-cleaned:

once dry-cleaned, always dry-clean.

Thanks to Dawn Perryman from Banyandah Alpacas near Noosa for generously sharing her knowledge for this article. ☺



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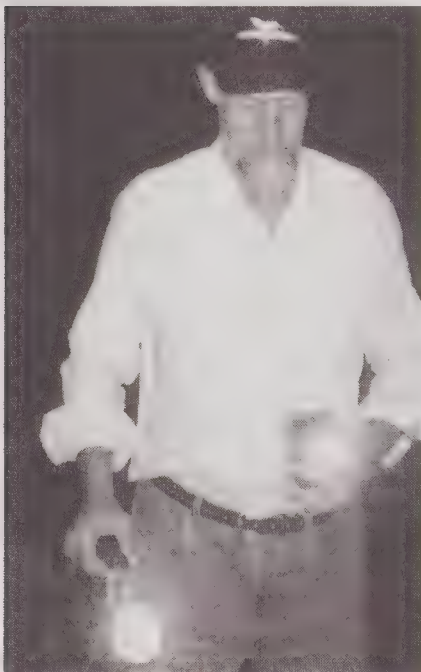
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Make A Versatile Torch

by Trevor Wilkins, Durong, Qld.

Ever cursed a store-bought torch after it left you in the dark just when you needed it most? The torch featured here is just perfect for after dark bush-walking: it has a spotlight at one end and a diffused reading-lamp style light at the other. The spot lights up owls, bats and tree snakes in the highest branches while the soft light illuminates the walking track for five metres all around, so you can avoid stepping on snakes or tripping over branches.

During six months of continual use, even as a reading lamp in my mobile home and boat, the battery (a recycled 12-volt motorcycle battery) only required two overnight recharges from my standard auto-battery charger and the original bulbs were still working well. This torch will never leave you in the dark because the bulb brightness tells you when the battery needs charging and gives you at least a week's warning. I kept the design simple so the torch is easy and cheap to build. Like my US army torch, it is built to last from plastic and brass.



Trever's torch features a spotlight at one end and diffused reading light at the other.

MATERIALS

- strip of sheet metal, preferably brass
- tinsnips
- plumbers' epoxy
- hacksaw
- pliers
- wire joiners
- battery
- wire
- two switches
- bulbs
- reflectors

You can reuse the last five items from an old motorcycle or buy them new at auto shops. The battery I used is a modern, lightweight sealed lead gel-acid type and came free from my friendly local motorcycle shop, having been destined for the dump. Similar batteries can be bought from auto shops. Motorcycle wreckers are another good source of such lightweight batteries, but choose carefully because many motorcycles run six-volt systems.

Electronics shops should stock auto-quality five-watt 12-volt torch bulbs and holders. Alternatively, auto interior light bulbs are usually five watts and, in a good reflector, will shine as brightly

as the brightest quartz halogen torch bulb. Bulbs rated higher than five watts will get very hot and could even become a fire hazard. As well, they'll quickly flatten your battery.

A wrecked car is another free source of switches, wire and bulbs, which are all designed for 12 volts.

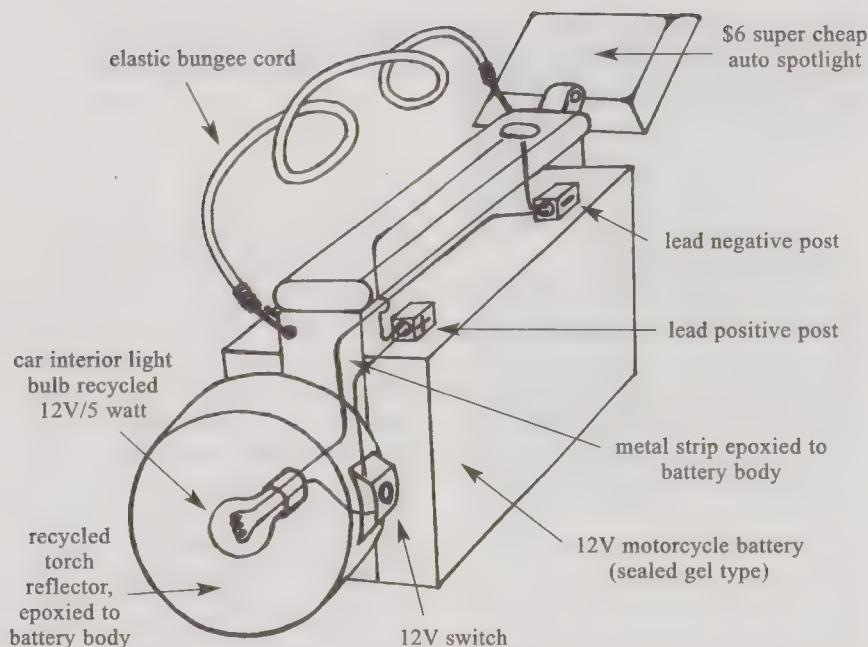
For my reflector I went to my box of broken torch bits. Most torches of even the cheapest variety have top quality reflectors.

CONSTRUCTION

Cut the reflector from an old torch using a hacksaw and epoxy it to the body of the battery. If you have room, you can even mould the switch and wiring into the housing of the reflector.

The epoxy I prefer for such jobs is plumbers' cast iron pipe-joining epoxy such as Charmac or Ferropree, which is available only at plumbing supply shops. Use wet rubber gloves to smooth and mould the mixed epoxy around wires and switches. Leave overnight to set. Remember to roughen all surfaces to be joined before gluing. Metal surfaces should be thoroughly scratched with a sharp knife point.

Try the lighted bulb in the reflector



to find the correct light-beam focus position before the epoxy sets. A handle is easily fashioned from a strip of metal and epoxied to the battery walls. You can glue the second reflector to the handle or onto the opposite end of the battery.

I bought a new mini-spotlight complete with cable and cigarette lighter plug from Super Cheap Autos for \$6. It uses the same bulb as the spotlight and doubles as the handle of my torch above the battery. It has its own built-in switch. I fitted it with a diffuser lens, which is nothing more than a piece of opaque plastic cut from a one-litre plastic milk bottle.

An elastic roof rack luggage strap on my torch makes life easy when I need both hands free for chores as

varied as bringing in my washing or baiting a hook. It makes the perfect shockproof shoulder strap and is easily attached to the torch's brass handle.

With the right cables such a 12-volt torch can even be used to jump-start your car in a flat-battery emergency. The array of small 12-volt appliances that are available in auto accessory and camping shops these days is astounding and this 12-volt torch can power them all. You'll need a fused, insulated cigarette lighter socket wired to suitable alligator clamps.

Always remember to choose the correct polarity when connecting leads to a 12-volt battery or you will damage your appliance. Positive (red) to positive (red): negative (black) to negative (black). If in doubt, don't! Ask at your



Bushwalking Tips

I have learnt these tips about walking and animal spotting in the Australian bush at night the hard way. Wear shoes, preferably soft-soled joggers or tennis shoes; you need something thin-soled that allows you to feel twigs underfoot. Wear thick socks and jeans to cover your legs.

Walk quietly, and talk only in whispers. If you seriously want to get close to wildlife, don't smoke or wear deodorant. Dab aniseed oil onto your clothes to negate the human scent. The aniseed smell might even attract foxes and dingoes. Sit quietly on top of a hill, wait 10 minutes then shine your torches back down along the trail. If there are foxes about, this is the easiest way to see them. Aniseed oil is available from chemists. Fishermen often use it on their lures or fishing tackle. I have heard that trout ticklers use aniseed oil as an attractant.



electronics shop for advice. If you don't like working with wires, give the job to your local auto electrician; it will only take him a few minutes.

A solar car battery charger is a good way to keep this torch shining brightly while on the road or out on your boat. The batteries last longer if they are kept fully charged, continually topped up. ☺



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A Walk Through Cloudlake

by Evon Binney, Nanango, Qld.

The rutted track rose up out of the rainforest walk and the air was cool and quiet except for the occasional shrill cry of a magpie. Several of our group were a little short of breath. It was quite a steep climb.

To our left, in a neighbour's paddock, shiny new red leaves of frost-free mangos on trial glistened in the sun. To the right, our guide Richard Jones drew our attention to a huge fig tree. A sense of pride and a genuine tenderness for his property was obvious as he stroked the smooth bark and told us a little of the early history of the timber industry in the district, about how the early settlers logged the wonderful cabinet timber trees in the surrounding forests.

We were visiting Cloudlake, the home of Richard and Rosemary Jones. Cloudlake is so called because early morning clouds often rise from the lake and float down the valley. Located somewhere between heaven and earth,

it emanates a sense of physical and spiritual renewal.

The 26-hectare property of rich volcanic loam is made up of farmland, gardens, olive groves, vineyards and rainforest. It nestles in a secret valley at over 600 metres, near Ravensbourne National Park, in south-east Queensland.

Because the garden is a good example of its type, as well as interesting and well maintained, it was selected as part of Australia's Open Gardens. The aim of this scheme is to promote the knowledge and pleasure of gardens and gardening across Australia and to open them to the public for a small fee. We, as visitors, felt privileged to share it.

Richard and Rosemary are professional landscape designers. This has meant years of dirty fingernails, bending, stooping and aching knees. Finally, their dream of a paradise not crushed under the heels of civilisation became reality. They came to

Cloudlake permanently in April 2001 after 11 years of weekend visiting.

Both had their own dreams of what Cloudlake should become. As a child in Derbyshire, England, Richard had gamekeeper uncles living in a charming cottage on a lake on Chatsworth Estate, and so he wanted a lake. Rosemary wanted a romantic rose garden with arbours to grow a collection of old-fashioned climbing roses. Now she has lavenders, echiums, geraniums, salvias, irises and rosemaries, to name a few, as well as her glorious roses.

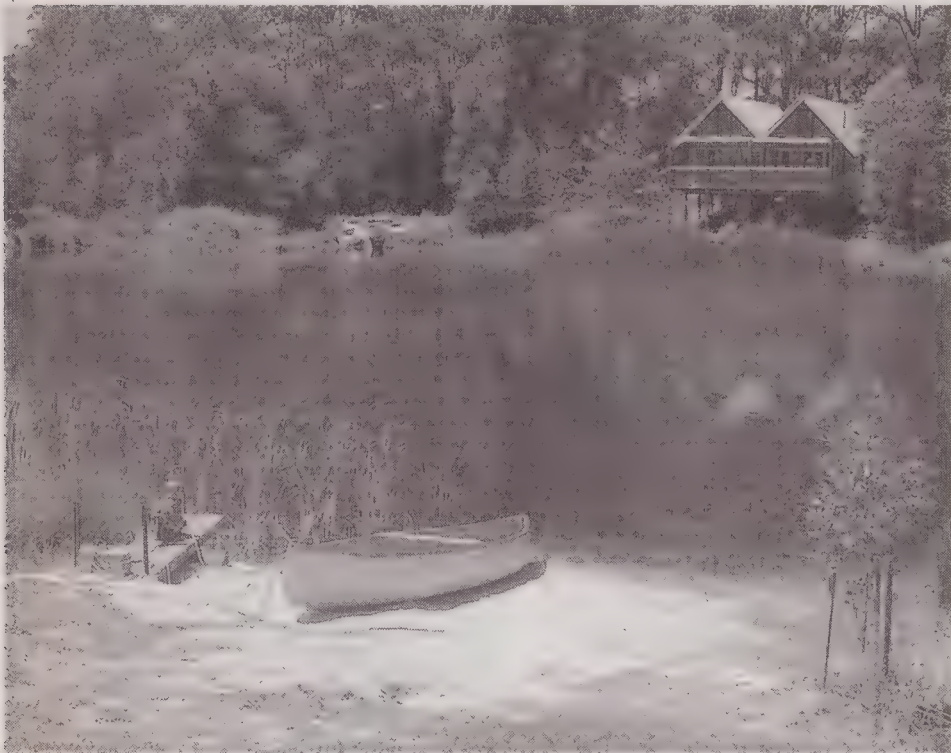
Our walk began near their house, a contemporary Australian rural style, or, as they describe it themselves, a barn-house.

We paused at the man-made lake close by to admire mesmeric reflections of the underwater garden, the Boathouse, a contemporary building with decks overhanging the lake, and the Mother of Ducks, a large funky cottage perched above the lake. This bed and breakfast accommodation is available to anyone wishing to share the Cloudlake dream and partake of the delicious home-grown organic produce.

The water supply reservoir was the biggest challenge in the Jones's master plan of what they set out to achieve. Because the clay-loam subsoil wasn't impervious enough to hold the water, it was lined with a special polyvinyl liner that they hope will last forever.

At nine metres deep in the middle, the lake has reeds, rushes and water lilies to filter nutrients, help prevent water loss, assist in pollution control and stabilise the banks. These plants also provide shelter for water dragons, nesting waterfowl and the frogs, which provide the chorus in the evening serenade, joining a melodious pair of resident reed warblers.

The Joneses are members of the Slow Food Society, an international movement with over 60,000 members in five continents. It is a movement for the protection of the right to taste. They take eating seriously and have



finally begun to reap the benefits of a self-sufficient and sustainable water-wise garden based on organic and permaculture principles.

Richard advised, 'Don't just dream about it, start – especially the planting of fruit and nut trees so you can enjoy their bounty'.

Organic practices to cope with thirsty summers and punishing winter winds were evident everywhere, with mulching, mulching and more mulching. The Joneses spend hours hand-weeding and hoeing. They look to diversity of species and attraction of wildlife to help with pest control, and use sheep poo, organic extras and composted cow manure to fertilise.

Wiltshire Longhorn ewes chewed as we passed and then dropped their heads to continue their task of weed control and fertiliser production. Richard explained that early hot weather was the reason they were looking a little raggy. They lose their fleece so there is no need to shear. The fence surrounding the sheep will be used to support a new crop of grapes.

The Joneses are investigating other stock, such as alpacas, to run with the sheep and Belted Galloways. Richard said there were dingoes on Clouldlake, but no foxes at this stage.

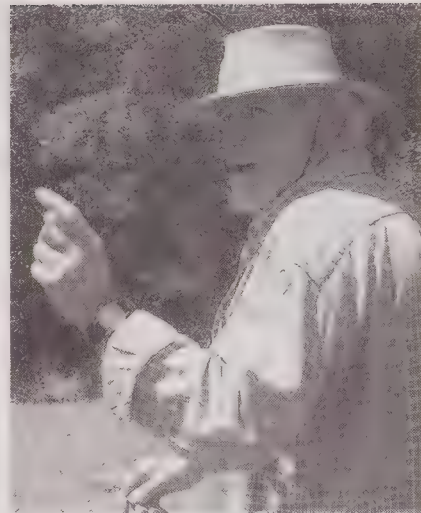
We then stopped at the bore, which drops 38 metres into the basalt. It pumps water to the lake for special occasions. Because the Joneses consider water to be precious, they honour the bore much like a sacred site each April with a well dressing, a traditional Derbyshire custom. Pictures from flowers and leaves are pressed into wet clay as a celebration of water.

We followed Richard further along the track, until we come upon a partly submerged fence in a ditch at the bottom of a bank. 'That's a ha', said Richard, his eyes twinkling.

Of course, the obvious response by all was, 'What's a ha?'

'When you hide a fence by placing it in a ditch at the bottom of a bank it is called a haha, (honestly!). Ours is only half hidden so we call it a ha', he replied with a grin.

By this stage, those not as young as they used to be were feeling the heat, but we soon entered a cool shady path and heard birdsong. Once in the rain-



Rosemary and Richard Jones take visitors for a tour around Clouldlake.

forest, the sounds, smells, colours and silence made everyone forget their discomfort. It was easy to sense an ancient time, as though no one had been there before.

Of Clouldlake's 26 hectares, about 10 are rainforest. Richard pointed out blue gums, flooded gums, tallow woods, red cedars, black beans and piccabeen palms. 'Sometimes we see a platypus here', said Richard, indicating a small waterhole in an amber-brown trickle meandering through the forest.

Reluctantly, we left the scented green coolness of the rainforest and made our way uphill past well-tended grapes and olives planted in alternate rows. The Joneses planted three varieties of whites – Semillon, Sauvignon Blanc and Verdelho – and several reds – Shiraz, Chambourcin, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Grenache and Malbec. They plan to make their own wine, however, they enthusiastically pointed out that the fruits also double as good eating table grapes.

At Clouldlake the Joneses pickle their own olives and have previously taken oil olives to Olive Australia for pressing and produced 15 litres of great oil. At present there are 1000 olive trees on Clouldlake, with 10 varieties to trial for the best. Some are dual purpose for oil and eating and some for oil only. Originally, people told them they were out of their tree to plant olives because the area was traditionally noted for avocados. 'But', Richard said as we moved on, 'avocados need 10

times more water than olives!'

Thick, green kikuyu sprang under our feet. Because Clouldlake sits at the dew point there is always a touch of green, even despite the severe lack of rain.

'This big vegie patch near the rainforest presents lots of problems when it comes to being totally organic', said Richard.

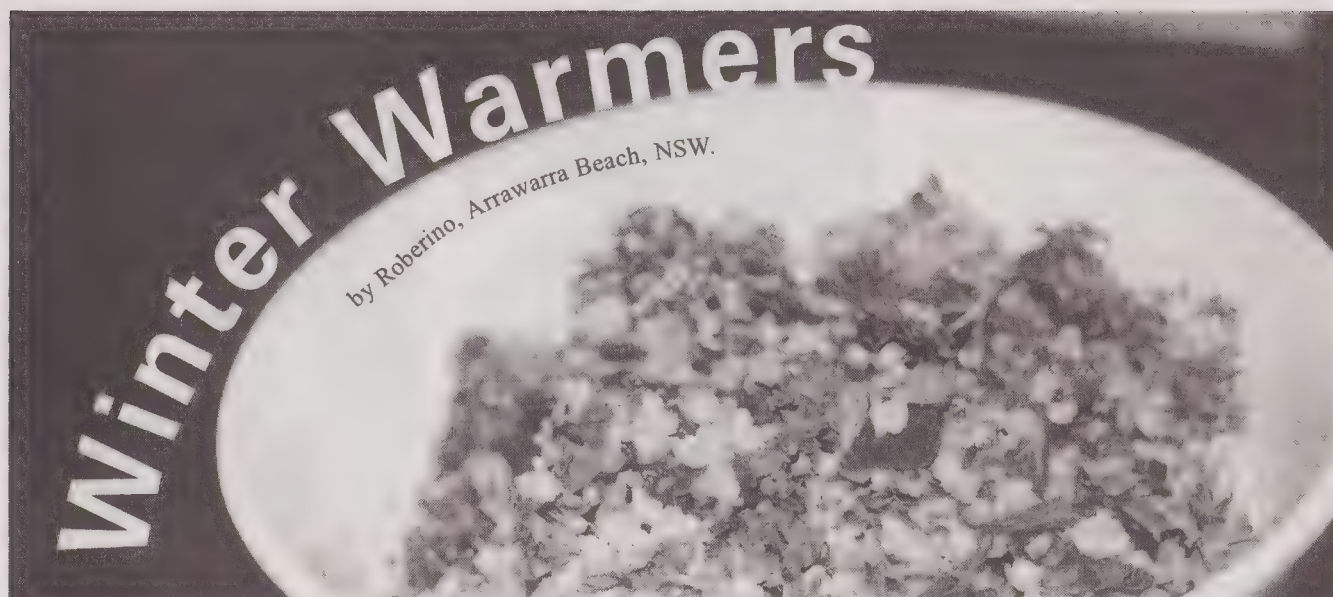
'So many seeds come from the forest trees we need a few workers with a hoe each to keep the weeds down.

'Raspberries have done rather well, but we need the low-chill variety', he said.

The organic gardener's gift of finding the right balance of respect and exchange with nature and the environment is evident everywhere. For Richard and Rosemary it involves hours, days, weeks and years of constant work and dedication, always with the scale and form of Richard's designs in mind.

The checklist the Joneses came up with when choosing Clouldlake is applicable to anyone wishing to make the move towards self-sufficiency. Their most desirable attributes in a property include elevation, soil, water, aspect, location, undeveloped nature, abundant wildlife, natural beauty, manageable size and cost.

To visit a place like Clouldlake, to talk to and gain knowledge and inspiration from people like Richard and Rosemary, is a wonderful experience. They are a couple who planted a dream – now they can enjoy the harvest. ☘



Both rice and dhal make the basis of satisfying winter meals; they're versatile, lending themselves to numerous variations, depending on what else is in the pantry or garden; and they're very economical.

RICE

Rice has been a staple food for much of the world for centuries; it was eaten in China 5000 years ago and is believed to have originated in the Indo-China region, though not as the intensively irrigated crop we know today. Its importance is indicated by the fact that in some languages the word for rice is the same as that for food. Over 2000 varieties of rice have been cultivated in various times and places, each with its distinctive qualities of flavour or consistency. Generally though, rice is categorised as either long-grain (Indian) or short-grain (Japanese).

The type of rice you choose will depend on the final use. Long-grain rices are drier than short-grain types and the grains separate easily when cooked. Short-grain rices are moister and can be glutinous or sticky when cooked. Arborio rice is the term used for plump short-grained rice that can absorb a lot of liquid and result in a creamy consistency when cooked.

Brown rice has only been lightly milled to remove the inedible husk, leaving the bran-covered kernel. It is higher in fibre, protein and other nutrients than

white rice and contains niacin (vitamin B3), magnesium, thiamin (vitamin B1), iron, protein, riboflavin (vitamin B2), calcium and zinc. The B-group vitamins are very water soluble and will be lost if the rice is cooked in too much water or fried at high temperatures.

This makes the absorption method the best way of cooking brown rice to retain the maximum nutrients. Different rices absorb differing amounts of water, so you will need to experiment with how much water to add to the rice you prefer; generally, one and a half to two cups of water per cup of rice is recommended. One cup of raw rice will serve from two to four people, depending on the amount of other food added to it or served with it. One cup of raw brown rice gives about three cups when cooked.

Brown rice will take longer to cook than white rice, usually about 40 to 45 minutes. Rice can be cooked, like pasta, in plenty of rapidly boiling water but to conserve nutrients use the absorption method. There are two ways of doing this.

- Bring one and a half to two cups of water to the boil. Add one cup of rice and salt to taste. Stir, cover saucepan, reduce temperature to lowest setting and let cook till all water has been absorbed, stirring once or twice during cooking. Allow to stand for a few minutes and fluff the rice with a fork before serving.

- Cover one cup of rice with one and a half to two cups of cold water and salt to taste. Bring to the boil, stir, cover pan, proceed as above.

To prevent rice from sticking to the saucepan it can be lightly brushed with olive oil before the rice is added. Fresh chopped vegetables and flavourings of your choice can be added to the rice prior to cooking, or can be cooked separately and added to the rice once it is cooked. Some cultures sauté the rice in oil till it is clear before cooking by whichever method you prefer.

Rice-based soups can be prepared similarly, but with up to five cups of water per cup of rice. A creamier soup can be made by substituting milk for some of the water.

DHAL

Dhal is a collective term for legumes and pulses (dried legume seeds) and includes pigeon peas, chickpeas, lentils, mung beans, black-eyed beans and red kidney beans. It's also used as the name for a soupy or stew-like meal based on any of the legumes. Dhal and grains are often combined in a recipe to give a good source of protein. In India different regions specialise in different styles of dhal.

I soak chickpeas and other legumes in clean water in the fridge overnight. I then strain and wash thoroughly in more clean water, being sure to remove any small pebbles or discoloured

LENTIL DHAL

1 cup dried red lentils
1 1/2 tbsp oil
1 lge onion, sliced finely
1 tsp garlic, finely chopped
1 tsp ginger, finely grated
1/2 tsp ground turmeric
3 cups hot water
salt and black pepper
1/2 tsp garam masala

Wash lentils, remove any that float to the surface, and drain. Heat oil in a saucepan and fry onion, garlic and ginger until onion is golden brown. Add turmeric and stir well. Mix in drained lentils and fry for 2 minutes. Add hot water, bring to the boil then reduce heat to simmer. Cover and cook 15 to 20 minutes or until lentils are half cooked. Add salt and garam masala, mix and continue cooking until lentils are soft with a consistency like porridge. If there is too much liquid, leave the lid off and reduce.

Add cooked vegies of choice, such as cubes of pumpkin, sweet potato and potato, or florets of cauliflower and broccoli, and serve with boiled rice. Serves 4.

peas/beans.

Dhal can be cooked in a microwave or pressure cooker, or on the stove top. Cooking times vary with each method and each different pulse; use the packet instructions as a guide and keep checking the first few times you cook a dish until you become familiar with how long each takes. Legumes should not be crunchy – a sign of insufficient cooking – nor mushy and devoid of all texture.

Some cultures insist that dhal be cooked slowly and the cooking water changed at least twice to prevent flatulence. The last cooking water change can include spices (curry is often used), milk, chicken stock and vegetables. Alternatively, the legume and other ingredients can be cooked separately and combined before serving. One hint is to cook enough legume for two meals, keep half in the fridge for a day or two and then combine it with quite different ingredients to those you used first time around. 🍴

Milky Matters

by John Mount, Mount Mee, Qld.

Did you know that in the days before the refrigerator milk was kept cool by the process of evaporation? A ceramic or glass jug of milk was placed in a dish of water and a thin cloth weighted around its edges with beads was placed over the container and the beads allowed to dangle in the water. The cloth soaked up the water, which evaporated in the air and which in turn kept the milk nice and cool.

I also wonder how many know that milk can be safely and conveniently frozen solid. The trick is not in the freezing of the milk, but in the defrosting process. *Never* defrost frozen milk at room temperature, and never freeze milk, or any liquid, in a glass container; the expansion of the liquid as it freezes will break the glass. Frozen milk is defrosted by leaving it in the warmest part of the fridge or by placing the container of milk in a pot or dish of iced water.

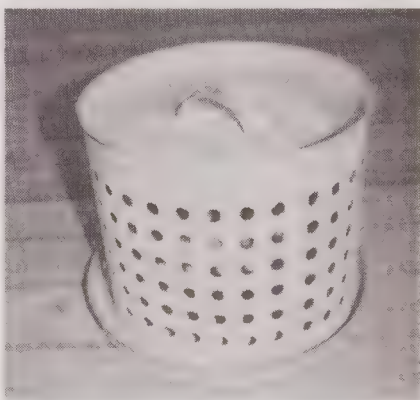
A little known trick to prevent the burning of milk is to place a sterilised glass or ceramic marble in the saucepan of milk while it is heating on the hotplate. The convection currents generated in the heated milk keep the marble in motion, which prevents the burning of the milk.

Another handy idea is to test the freshness of milk by pushing a sterilised polished needle into the milk and immediately withdrawing it in an upright

position. If the milk is pure, some of the liquid will adhere to the needle.

Ever noticed how milk can make quite a mess when it boils over the edge of the pot? Before too much flows over the edge, quickly lift the saucepan up, give it a slight bump and the milk will settle immediately.

Cleaning the remnants of milk from pots and pans is often difficult, but there are two ways of making it easier. First, always rinse the saucepan with water before pouring in the milk, then, after pouring out the last of the heated milk, always fill the empty pot with water and allow it to sit before washing. 🍴



The saucer of this galvanised iron food cooler is filled with water, then cheesecloth is wrapped around the sides and top to absorb the water. This keeps the jug of milk inside cold.

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Travelling On A Budget

by Maggie Anatouska, On The Road.

Travelling on a budget can be done very easily. My partner and I started out in a Kombi campervan with our dog. After a run of bad luck we lost our van and our dog, but that didn't deter us from getting back on the road. If you're thinking of travelling, I highly recommend that you travel in a van or camper, depending on how many of you there are. You can get a guide for every state that tells you about national parks and the facilities that are available. It's a cheap stopover, or you can stay for a while and do some treks. Some national parks do not allow domestic pets, so check it out. At some rest areas you are allowed to stay for up to 48 hours.

The biggest expense we found is fuel, which is unavoidable. Do over-budget for it because some country towns have very, very expensive fuel, and food. Most of the time when travelling we shop at local markets for the fresh fruit and veg and the local knowledge.

Don't be shy to ask locals questions. You can come across rude people, but more than likely you will find someone happy to have



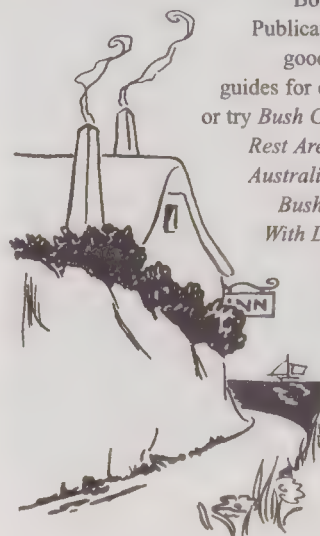
a yarn and give you some info.

If you are going on a working holiday, you can do a bit of research before you leave. Visit your local Centrelink office and find out the seasons for fruit and veg picking and packing. Although I found the information at Centrelink to be limited, it's a start. You can buy a book called *Workabout Australia* that tells you everything about every state's seasonal work: where to stay, who to call. Again, I suggest you research further when you get to that town because you might find somewhere cheaper to stay. If you are going to a touristy area, you can easily find work in hospitality or tourism. The most important thing is to remember to stay open-minded, have fun, be happy. Travelling will change your life.

More Info

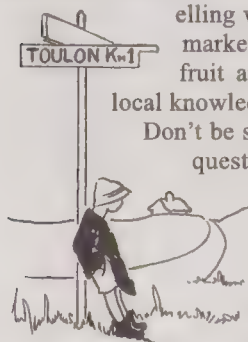
You might want to join WWOOF (Willing Workers On Organic Farms) if working and travelling, website: www.woof.com.au Other good internet camping sites include <http://parks.camping.com.au> and www.atn.com.au

Boiling Billy Publications print good camping guides for each state, or try *Bush Camps and Rest Areas Across Australia*, or even *Bush Camping With Dogs*, published by Flat Earth Mapping.



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Casey The Vegetarian Kelpie

by Jan Clifton, Scone, NSW.

Casey and her owner had travelled for three days in order to be home by Christmas in the Hunter Valley, NSW. They had been working on a remote property in the Northern Territory.

After a few days it was obvious something was wrong with the dog. Normally a happy boisterous dog, she became listless, was off her food and appeared a little bloated. We took her to the vet, who did blood tests and x-rays. The blood reports indicated severe pancreatitis. She was a very sick little dog and had to stay in hospital on a drip of antibiotics and fluid. We visited her twice a day. Nobody knew if her life could be saved.

After eight days of love and care, Casey was well enough to come home. We were advised to feed her on a low-fat diet. Specially prepared tinned dog food was very expensive, and still contained fats. Most commercial dog biscuits have a high percentage of fat too. I had to find an alternative.

Good old *Grass Roots* to the rescue. I remembered reading about a type of dog biscuit that reminded me of timber sizing. Out came all my magazines and I found the article. Farrell's four by twos and kibble were available from a store in a nearby town. I purchased both because the protein and fat contents were acceptable and the biscuits would be good for Casey's teeth. She immediately liked the kibble, but the comical expressions and the antics when I first gave her the larger biscuits were quite amusing. Now they're an everyday part of her diet.

She has learnt to love vegetables, but not too much silverbeet please. A special treat once a week is rolled oats and skim milk, which is eaten with much enjoyment.

Casey has had three further bouts of pancreatitis in the past eight years, but none as bad as the first one. One year I gave the chooks a stale Christmas pudding. The temptation was too much for Casey, who dug a hole under the netting fence and ate



the lot. I found her, still in with the chooks, looking very guilty and sheepish – she couldn't get out. Luckily, she didn't get sick either. She has her yearly check-up with the vet and, apart from now being partially deaf, remains active and healthy. She adores children and loves to play 'fetch'. A secret delight is to ambush Sophie the Siamese as she comes through a doorway.

I grow most of my own vegies so making up dog meals is not a problem. Enough food for two weeks can be made up and frozen in ice cream containers until needed. We share oven-roasted vegies dredged in olive oil and crushed garlic; pumpkin is a

CASEY'S CUISINE

To make up a supply of food you'll need enough water in a medium-sized boiler to cook 1½ cups of brown rice or pearl barley for 20 minutes. Then add vegies, preferably with no more water:

4 lge potatoes, unpeeled and cut into chunks

1 lge piece pumpkin, cut in chunks

6 lge carrots, unpeeled and cut

1 lge handful green beans, cut in half

1 cup peas

Put lid on boiler and cook gently for 20 minutes.

This is the base of the food, but you can add any other vegies you wish. Pasta, plain rice or rolled oats can be incorporated as well.

When all is cooked, I sometimes add two tablespoons of Vegemite. Remove the pan from the heat, make four or five hollows in the top of the vegie mix and break an egg into each one. Put the lid back on and leave till cool. The eggs will have set. You can now put the food into containers to freeze.

favourite. In winter we share soup, not in the same bowl of course. Cottage cheese, a slice of bread and baked beans are occasional treats Casey enjoys for a bit of variety. She also enjoys fruit: apples, pears, mandarins and even watermelon.

No more outback adventures for this curious black and tan canine who once became lost for a week after running off with another dog into the desert. Thirst made her return to the bore at the site she'd run away from.

Becoming vegetarian has given Casey yet another chance in her doggy life. She most certainly would have died long ago had she remained on a 'normal' diet. 🐾

Almost Vegetarian Dog Diet

by Tess Alaimo, Singleton, WA.

I have the two most amazing Border Collies in the world. Kalsy is 10½ years old and Harvey is two. We share a beautiful relationship and I don't want anything but the best for my two friends. That's why I decided to start making their food. For nearly a year I have been making this mixture, much to their canine delight, and the results have been amazing.

Kalsy has lost four kilograms in weight and seems to find it much easier to get going in the mornings. Both have fresh-smelling breath and shiny coats, they don't clear the room when they 'fluff', and are generally very happy healthy-looking dogs. To begin with their diet contained lots of vegetables, especially leafy greens, garlic and oats, along with mince and offal, though I have never been too happy about feeding my dogs meat.

Recently, I became a vegetarian and am investigating how to become a vegan and slowly making changes to do so. I don't believe meat is healthy, especially chicken, and it certainly isn't too good for the animals we destroy so we can eat them. If I can live a better healthier life without meat, I thought my dogs could too. I began leaving the mince out of the mixture (it was becoming very expensive as well), though for now I will keep adding a very small percentage of diced offal, hence the almost vegetarian dog diet. I hope to soon find an offal alternative



that my dogs will enjoy eating.

Making this mixture is a lot easier and cheaper if you have a vegie and herb garden because you can use the slightly damaged vegies and leaves. The dogs really don't mind a few spinach leaves that have been nibbled by caterpillars, or celery with a little leaf spot. Actually, my dogs would probably love the caterpillars, but then that's meat, isn't it. If you make yourself yummy juices, you can add the leftover pulp to the mixture as well. Just bag it and freeze it until you are ready to make your next dog food mixture.

After doing this for my dogs, I could never go back to regularly feeding them commercially produced dog food; the results are too beneficial and speak for themselves. Kalsy and Harv show me how much they appreciate it with big smiles, big cuddles and conditional love: 'Make us more mixture and we'll love you even more'.

THE KALSY AND HARV DIET

These are approximate quantities depending on the size of the pot the mixture is cooked in and what the chef has available.

1½ cups rice
1½ cups oats
3 cloves garlic
1 knob ginger, diced
0.5 kg diced offal

0.5 kg mince, optional
a little oil
1 tbsp Vegemite
1 cup chopped mint or parsley
2 cups grated carrot
1 cup diced pumpkin
1 potato, diced
1 cup diced celery
3 med tomatoes, chopped
1 cup diced broccoli
½ capsicum, diced
½ eggplant, diced
2 cups diced silverbeet
1 cup water
2 eggs

Cook rice as you normally would. Just before it's ready add oats. Set aside when cooked. In a large pot, fry garlic, offal, and mince if you are using it, in the oil. Add Vegemite and turn heat down to simmer. Add rice and oats mixture to large pot and stir to combine. Add vegies and herbs. Add cup of water and eggs and stir. Turn off heat and put lid on pan. Leave to cool, stirring regularly. When cool, place about two biggish scoops (vary according to the size and activity level of your dog) into plastic bags and seal. Makes about 10 to 12 bags. To use one per day, keep two in the fridge and freeze the rest.

When feeding my dogs I mix one cup of top quality dog biscuits into the younger dog's food and half a cup into the older dog's mixture. 🐾



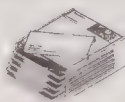
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KERO AND CHOOKS' LEGS

I've got a remedy here for chook keepers. I'm getting on in years, but am happy to pass this tip on to readers. When fowls go lame, prick the legs with a sharp needle and rub in kerosene. They will be fine very quickly.

**Lionel Arendt,
PANGIL 3597.**

This is certainly an oldie Lionel and goes back to the 1940s when kerosene was used for its insecticidal properties. In the case of lameness, it would only have worked if the condition was the result of scaly leg mite. When this external parasite is allowed to multiply unchecked for a length of time, the victim's legs become thickened with a dry, scaly appearance. Pricking the scaly mass would have provided entry points for the kerosene to permeate (the mites develop a honeycomb of passageways in the encrusted mass). Its presence there as well as on the surface would have effectively killed many if not all the mites. If the lameness is not caused by this mite, you would be inflicting unnecessary pain on an already distressed fowl. There are more welfare-friendly solutions today; refer back to GR 150 for options for scaly leg, the simplest being regular application of cheap olive oil or petroleum jelly. What else may cause lameness? An infestation of tapeworm can lead to this symptom. Suspect it following heavy falls of rain in summer time with wet ground and a rapid multiplication of flies and other insects. Consult a vet for treatment as tapeworm is difficult to eradicate. Deficiency in vitamin D results in mild deformities and difficulty walking, as does a shortfall in biotin. It's not uncommon for synovitis to occur, which results in painful, swollen hock joints. This can be due to inflammation or infection and if a period of isolation and TLC doesn't elicit results, a visit to the vet or humane

despatch should be considered. Lameness could also indicate Marek's disease, a usually fatal affliction, and no treatment, not even kerosene, will reduce its severity. Use kerosene to brush on woodwork in hen houses if red mite is suspected, but not in nests where it could be absorbed through the eggshell. It is unsuitable for organic operations because it's derived from petroleum.

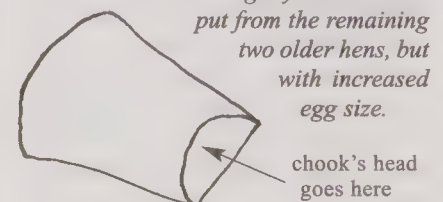
CULLING LAYERS

We keep three to four brown hens for our egg supply. Could you please give me the most humane method of culling? We tried Bill Stanhope's method of dislocating the neck (from Australasian Poultry), but unless you are big of hands and wide of shoulders this is very difficult. We had to resort to tomahawk over chopping block.

**R Inglis,
TAMBORINE 4270.**

This is a delicate subject, but it is essential that whatever method you use, the birds don't suffer. You did the right thing by going to a tried and tested method and the axe is always easier if the bird's legs are securely tied. Years ago a manufacturer in Adelaide used to make and sell killing funnels. They were made from metal and looked like half a galvanised bucket that had a narrower base or bottom than normal. They had a flat side with the rounded section attached to this and were open top and bottom. The bird was slipped into the funnel, which kept it quiet and secure. The head and neck were easy to access and the process fairly civilised. I've wished for a killing funnel for years because, like you, my neck stretching skills are poor. It's possible I would make a good chicken chiropractor! You need to be physically shown how to dislocate the neck; an old timer in your area would probably be glad to demonstrate this, or contact the closest

poultry club and see if a member is prepared to assist. You haven't mentioned the age of the hens. It's not necessary to cull pullets at the end of their first laying season, although this is standard practice in commercial operations. You might find that a replacement system of two new pullets in and two oldies out every year works well. This would provide the optimum number of pullet eggs and a slightly reduced output from the remaining



OLD BATTERIES

GR folk who own cows and possibly other farmstock may benefit from my sad experience. The property has some untidy areas and around the sheds were a couple of old batteries. A cow and calf licked the batteries, attracted by the powder from the acid, which they thought was salt. Poisoning resulted and one cow had to be put down and a calf died. Don't leave old vehicle batteries where stock can access them.

**Jenny C,
KILMORE 3764.**

NATURAL MEDICINE

Correspondence courses written by

Isaac Golden, PhD, D. Hom

Homoeopathy - Austudy accredited professional Advanced Diploma or an intermediate course for parents

Natural Medicine - a basic course covering home prescribing

For full details contact:

Dr Isaac Golden

PO Box 155, Daylesford, 3460.

Ranch Road, Daylesford

Phone 03-5348-3667

users.netconnect.com.au/i_golden/



MOBILE PHONE RECYCLING

According to what you read or who you listen to on any given day, mobile phones are either being sent to landfill in their millions and about to create environmental havoc as their toxic components leach into the soil and water, or Australia is leading the world in the recycling of mobile phones, with about 280 tonnes of mobile phone waste having been processed for recycling in the last four years. Whichever is the more accurate scenario, it is up to consumers to make recycling schemes successful by participating in them. A recent report indicated that there were over 1600 drop-off points Australia-wide operated by phone dealers and retailers, and this number is expected to grow. Usable resources gained from mobile phone recycling include nickel, cadmium, plastics and small quantities of gold and silver.

An interesting development from researchers at the University of Warwick that could become available in the future is a mobile phone case containing the seed of a dwarf sunflower. The case can be buried in compost or the ground at the end of its life and begins to decompose in weeks, ultimately producing a sunflower.

To find out if there is a drop-off point near you phone 1300-730-070, or type your postcode into: www.phonerecycling.com.au

PELICAN RESCUE

In 1992 Lance Ferris conducted a survey of pelicans at the Richmond River, Ballina, NSW. Of 108 pelicans, 37 had been injured by fishing tackle. Further studies along the NSW north coast found that at all major estuaries from 10 to 20 percent of the pelicans were injured or entangled. These findings led to the establishment of Australian Seabird Rescue, a community volunteer group supported by Federal Government funding. The aim is to improve the welfare of sea and shore birds and marine turtles and reduce human impact on their habitat. As well as identifying and rescuing affected birds, Lance Ferris and the team spread the word about the



consequences of littering and unsafe fishing practices through the media, public forums and visits to schools. There are now numerous volunteer teams set up to look after local estuaries along the NSW coastline. The Richmond River success story is that there was soon a 60 percent reduction in the number of injured shore birds.

To find out more about Australian Seabird Rescue email: seabirdrescue@bigpond.com

GREEN ENERGY FROM WASTE-WATER

Anaerobic treatment regimes at wastewater management facilities (WMFs) produce large quantities of methane, a greenhouse gas 21 times more destructive than carbon dioxide. Goulburn Valley Water in Victoria has until now burned off the methane at their three high-rate anaerobic lagoons by a flare system at 800° C. A recent grant of \$800,000 from the Victorian State Government will assist GV Water to harness the methane to generate green power. This project has the potential to reduce greenhouse emissions by 17,000 tonnes per year and provide renewable energy for over 2600 homes.

NEWS ON MUNDULLA YELLOWS

Mundulla yellows syndrome has been responsible for the disease and death of huge swathes of native vegetation across the country. Plants affected include eucalypts, wattles, banksias and grevillias. Researchers trying to track down the cause of the yellows have so far eliminated fungi, bacteria, phytoplasmas and nematodes, and have also established that the disease is not insect-borne, nor transmitted by grafting.

What has emerged as a common factor at three separate study sites is

that the soil affected trees are growing in is alkaline with high levels of salts and low levels of iron. Rectifying these soil conditions caused symptoms to disappear. Researchers speculate that the interaction of these undesirable soil conditions contributes to but is not the sole cause of the problem. These findings support the work of a previous researcher who linked Mundulla yellows with herbicide residues, which are possibly the catalyst for the changed soil chemistry (see this page in GR 143).

ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT

For over four years 1300 scientists in 95 countries worked at compiling the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA), the world's first global inventory of natural resources. As well as assessing the state of ecosystems, the MA looks at their impact on human wellbeing. The most disturbing finding is that about 60 percent of the earth's ecosystem services are being used unsustainably. Fisheries and fresh water supplies are already unable to sustain present demands, let alone meet future needs. Forests have been practically eliminated from 25 countries and the forested area in a further 29 countries has been reduced by over 90 percent. There are grave concerns for the state of the earth's biodiversity, with estimates that between 10 and 30 percent of all terrestrial vertebrates are under threat of extinction.

Despite these and other dire findings, experts stress that it is not too late to initiate changes that will have a long-term beneficial impact. Proactive planning on a global, rather than local, basis is most likely to achieve successful outcomes. Recommendations include elimination of wasteful and destructive agricultural subsidies, payments to landowners for maintaining habitats, taxation of goods in accordance with their environmental costs and placement of ecosystem health as a specific policy goal. The report's findings have no authority to compel change, but the hope is that it will influence decision-makers and be a catalyst for sustainable policies. ♻️

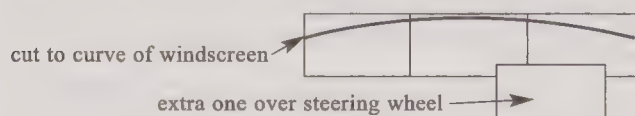
FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear GRs,

Unused newspapers from any newsagent are a valuable resource for anyone living on acreage. I secure them into bundles of the size I need, whether it's for working on the car or milking a cow. Just a few are great for keeping your bottom off the ground in wet weather. A workbench I made about 12 years ago is still in use. It is very handy in that I can easily vary the height to suit the job and I'm not worried about getting glue or grease on it – I just renew the top bundle when needed. I use Danband plastic bands and buckles; these are very strong and quickly make the newspaper bundles into strong building blocks.

Ensure anything that you rely on to carry heavy weights is stable and won't overbalance, so anchor them to something very substantial.

Plastic components are an increasing part of motor cars because plastic is lightweight, usually very cheap to make and requires little in the way of painting or trimming. That's okay in Sweden or Finland, but in Australia the heat causes the plasticisers to out-gas or evaporate. Plasticisers are the components of the plastic that give it the flexibility. These chemicals become excited under heat and migrate through the other chemicals until they escape into the atmosphere. Check out the inside glass of a windscreen of an older car with a cracked dashboard and you will note a blueish haze, caused by chemicals that have escaped from the dashboard. It costs a few hundred dollars to replace the plastic covering on a dashboard, so it would make sense to protect it from severe summer heat. I've used the tops of broccoli boxes for this task as I had a \$45 **DASHBOARD COVER** accessory that did not stop this heat problem. (I use broccoli boxes to make my vegie garden as I have poor soil.) When I have to leave my car all day in blistering sun I put the broccoli box lids over the dashboard, parcel shelf and steering wheel. I've cut the lids on their long sides to mate with the curve of the windscreen and they don't take up much space in the boot when not in use. You can also arrange them vertically to keep the whole car cool.



TEN-LITRE WATER CASKS in a protective carrying box are prized items for me. The casks are great for carrying liquids around, especially for picnics or bush hikes. Just pop off the top, fill it with soup etc and put the top back on. The carrying box is very handy as a tool or craft box as it has a good strong handle and is easily opened or closed. I've even used it as a cat 'cage' when going to the vet.

The smartest idea I've ever seen for cheap living and travel was in London. A couple had bought an **OLD DELIVERY VAN** for furniture and fitted it out inside as a mobile home with toilet, shower, kitchen and so on. Okay, that's pretty unusual, but here's the cunning bit. When they bought it from the removalist company, they bargained a lot of money off the purchase price by offering to keep all the signwriting on the van and thus in their travels far and wide be an advertising medium. That's smart too, but here is the real doozy. Parking in central London and suburbs can be a bit dodgy due to the authorities not really liking people living in campervans or parking near busy thoroughfares. However, a well-known British traditional 'salt of the earth' firm of long standing, with 'Royal by Appointment' logos, is another matter entirely. To conceal the fact that anyone was living inside the van there were no windows in it and the only access was

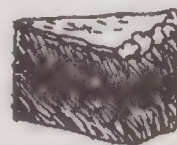
through the front doors of the cab. The roof of the van had been transformed into a large window with ventilation and, as they parked under a street light at night time, they had free lighting. Now that is really smart. When they wanted to go to sleep they pulled a roller blind across the rooftop window so they had darkness. They hardly used the loo or kitchen because they made sure they were near a pub for the loo and a fast-food or cheap restaurant for easy meals. They, naturally, parked somewhere near work so they could get there quickly, and near a tube station if they had to travel anywhere. Their biggest expense when they travelled was diesel fuel, but they saved so much on their living expenses they laughed all the way to the bank. I'm not suggesting you could do this in Australia, but the thought is tempting, isn't it?

Roberino,

PO Box 359, WOOLGOOLGA 2456.

Dear Grass Roots Staff,

Fantastic job, fantastic magazine. I recently got involved in a recipe tree, from where this letter came to my mother, from a lady on Bribie Island, Queensland. I haven't baked the cake as yet, but intend doing so shortly. The story attached to the recipe is an interesting one, though I can't guarantee its veracity.



To make **THE ONE HUNDRED DOLLAR CAKE** you need 2 cups plain flour, 5 tablespoons cocoa, 1 cup sugar, 2 teaspoons bicarb soda, pinch of salt, 1 cup mayonnaise, 1 cup water and vanilla essence to taste. Beat everything together for two to five minutes. Bake at 350° C for 20 – 25 minutes.

The story behind cake recipe is that an old friend of the sender's mother during the 1970s dined at a famous hotel while in the States, ordered this cake then asked for the recipe. The chef came to her and gave her the recipe. On receiving the bill at the end of such a lovely afternoon tea, she found she had been charged \$100 for the recipe. Thus, the name. She vowed she would pass it on to as many people as she could.

Sue Cowell,

STRATHPINE 4500.

Dear Grass Roots,

To answer the inquiry by Penny Ferguson (GR 167) about **TICKS**; an old farmers' trick is to make a cup of tea for the dog. Tannin eventually somehow finds its way to the skin and is a tick deterrent. Either way the dog can't lose: it has a refreshing drink in summer and warming drink in winter. I use the cheapest tea bags available or reuse my normal brand. Put in a drop of milk and make to whatever strength is desired. So far, no ticks, but I now have extras waiting for their morning cuppa.

Liz Tyrell,

C/- Post Office, FINCH HATTON 4756.

Dear Readers,

I recently bought a book at the Geelong wool museum: *Heritage Farming in Australia, The Sloan Family 1860 – 1945*. It is the most interesting book I have ever read, giving an account of the daily lives of the people and having numerous old-fashioned photos. The cost is \$39.95. If you are interested in obtaining a copy ring the museum on 03-5227-0701.

Stan Polley,

751 Lake Rd, CONNEWARRE 3227.

Sending your Feedback letter via email?

Please remember to include your name, phone number and street address.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear Megg & Friends,

Thank you for a great mag. I've really enjoyed the articles about **FAMILIES LIVING IN TOWN**, particularly as that's me – town, rent, trying self-sufficiency – which brings its own challenges. This magazine is such a vital part of our (readers') lives. It inspires, calms, excites and, best of all, we get to communicate with fellow people who know the worth of homemade soap or rushing around feeding animals before work. Workmates think I come from another planet.

I would love to see some budget articles to help us save money and from people having a sea change without the big kitty.

Love to hear from anyone, anywhere.

Chery & Family.

Dear GRs,

Does any reader have a copy of **'MOLLY DYE'S HOME-MADE LOTIONS AND POTIONS'** that they would be willing to sell me? I am willing to pay a fair price for a copy in good condition.

Eugenio Muratore,
695 Lower North East Rd, PARADISE 5075.
Ph: 08-8337-6887 (AH).

Dear Grass Roots,

Enclosed is a photo of my cow Spot. I wonder if any readers would have for sale or know where I could purchase **HARNESS, COLLAR** etc for Spot. The harness I have on her in the picture is borrowed from the Highfields Pioneer Village. I use Spot for shows, milking, demonstrations and charity events. I am also looking to buy bullock yokes to train a couple of steers. As well, although I guess they are few and far between now, I would like to buy a buggy or cart for Spot to pull.

If any charities in Queensland need something different for an event, they are welcome to contact me. Everything I do is voluntary, I do not charge for this, but appreciate help for transport if available. If anyone has any of the above for sale, it will be well looked after and put to good use.

Judy Barnet,
11639 Cunningham Hwy, CLINTONVALE 4370.
Ph: 07-4666-1778.
Email: judy.housecow@bigpond.com



To GR Folk,

After browsing through some old GR mags I read a question asking how to **DISPOSE OF FOXES** in a humane manner. After three years of looking for a property, eventually buying one in the Strathbogie Ranges, and five years of learning to take care of sheep, I met a German lady who told me how to do this. Saffron (*Crocus sativus*) is very deadly in large amounts. I understand that 20 grams is enough to kill a human. My friend uses only five stamens (put inside a piece of meat), and is adamant that it makes foxes go to sleep and never wake up. I have purchased 12 bulbs and my first shoots are just coming up. If anyone is interested, I suggest they read anything they can on saffron in herbal books or on the internet. If this really does work, then it is a much more humane way to go for 'Foxy Lox' than 1080.

For those who might be looking for a nutritional supplement for their stock I now use a product from Munash Fertilisers. I use three parts copra to one part supplement. My sheep love it. I just put it out under shelter, small amounts at a time.

Marilyn, STRATHBOGIE.

Dear GR People,

I'm a Queenslander, living in a lovely seaside area known as Redcliffe, near Brisbane. The area and lifestyle are great, but our Queensland summers are sooo hot and humid that I am looking for an area on the **AUSTRALIAN MAINLAND** which is **MUCH COOLER** to retire to and start a new life. I've been told that Victoria abounds with many cooler climate areas such as Mansfield, Seymour, Benalla and Beechworth. The idea of cold winters sounds truly wonderful, and warm, not hot, summers would be a bonus.

I am a divorced lady in my early 60s, have lots and lots of interests and am keen to correspond with any interested persons, male or female, to learn about these areas in Victoria. One day soon I may have an email address, but at the moment contact will have to be by letter writing. Please write if you can give me information on this subject. It would be very much appreciated and I will answer all letters.

Kay McLennan,
7 Chorley St, KIPPA-RING 4021.

Whatever area you decide on Kay, we suggest you try to spend a lengthy period there during both winter and summer before burning any bridges. Long cold winters can be very trying for people who are not used to cold weather and many places in Victoria also experience extremes of heat in summer.

Dear Megg & GR friends,

I am writing to tell readers how I **CURED MY CHRONIC SEVERE HAEMORRHOIDS**. One day my greenie brother-in-law advised me to drink stinging nettle juice. I rounded up my friends who lived out of town and got them to bring me stinging nettles, boiled them up, strained them and drank the juice. After a few months my haemorrhoids had completely disappeared and I even lost a bit of weight. I have a glass of the juice every morning. It is not bad to drink, tasting something like spinach.

Regards to my friend Eileen Webster in Crookwell.

Dot Hallam,
18 Bent St, LITHGOW 2790.

Contributors and correspondents who want letters or articles returned are requested to include correct postage.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear GR,

I love your magazine and pester the local librarian for specific issues. There truly is a great, inventive, survivalist culture in our fine wide country. Perhaps one of your helpful readers can help me with a recipe for **CHILLI CORDIAL**. My dear nan-in-law used to make it years ago, but the recipe was never written down and, now that she has passed over, I'd love to make it for my grandchildren – it was so refreshing – not really sweet.



Liz Ahearn,

Lot 35 Velvet St, IRONBARK RANGE 4306.

Dear GR Friends,

We have been lucky enough to have bought our little piece of paradise for \$53,000. It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and is in the Welshpool area in Victoria, on the coast near Wilsons Promontory.

We were lucky to find it, as it is a little beach house on 3 1/4 acres, with beautiful tea tree, gums and a water bore. Many properties in this area are very cheap. We found our house through Landmark Real Estate, Yarram. If you contact this agency, they will send you a property listing regularly. Occasionally cheap properties come up for sale.

We are currently using a 12-volt set-up for our electricity; it runs off a car battery. Is there anybody who has plans for or has made a wind generator? We would love to make one.

Would anyone like to write? We love permaculture, art, craft, music, healing and belly dancing and would love some penpals.

Shaz & Bret Middleton,

285 Rossitters Rd, HEDLEY 3967.

Dear Megg & Family,

I have been a reader of GR for over 20 years now and enjoy reading it very much. We are currently touring Tasmania and on arrival three months ago contacted Marjorie Bligh. I had seen two TV programs about Marjorie and was most anxious to meet her, and there you helped me by printing her letter in GR. What a charming, intelligent lady! I was delighted when she invited me into her home and chatted for 30 minutes or so. Her quick mind keeps you on your toes.

Marjorie's kindness is renowned. I purchased the craft book from her and she kindly gave me the book *Tasmania and Beyond* for my husband.

Tasmania is a beautiful state with everything going for it. Their produce is to die for. Potatoes and tomatoes are fulsome in flavour.

It has taken me so long before writing to you all. As I am 71 years of age, I guess I won't leave it another 20 years before writing again.

Margaret Roberts,

Unit 203, RAAFA Estate,

Hughie Edwards Dr, MERRIWA 6030.

Dear GR Readers,

I am an Irish student one year into a two-year diploma in permaculture. I recently received a copy of your fabulous magazine from a friend of my fiancée's (she's an Aussie), I suspect in an attempt to entice me over to your side of the world, and boy has it worked! Kristylee is making the long trip home in time for the Australian Permaculture Conference in Melbourne in April (how exciting) and I'm following her over at the beginning of June, with the view of staying until early September. Our plan is to immerse ourselves in all things sustainable and learn as much as we can about **TROPICAL PERMACULTURE PRINCIPLES**.

We will be based in Newcastle initially, and travelling north along the east coast (we have our own transport). We would love to meet like-minded people, get involved in green building projects and

organic horticulture, visit sustainable properties and generally help where we can. We feel we have a few skills that might be of use: I have a background in sculpture and engineering and Kristylee, also an artist, makes the best cocktails you'll ever taste!

We would also really appreciate any information on upcoming festivals, friendly camping areas, meditation centres or Buddhist retreats. Really looking forward to hearing from anyone out there, even if it's only to share our experiences of sustainable living in Ireland. For convenience, we've included an Australian address for correspondence.

Irish proverb: It is best to cultivate a heart of love that knows no anger.

Kristylee Grainger,

9 Parkstone Cl, SPEARS POINT 2284.

Email: donal_ogara@yahoo.com

Hello GR Readers,

I came back from Canada, USA and Scotland, relocated and proceeded to take things out of storage, found my GR mags and sat down to have a reread. I cannot find an article written by Owen from Katanning, WA. He wrote about his hot water system that he added pieces to to enable him to have free hot water on the sunny days; it involved black pipe around the garden. I would love his address if anyone can remember that article, as I would like to write to him to order the parts for the hot water system. I missed the recipe for the three-ingredient cake that was mentioned in Feedback. Thank you in anticipation.

I must tell you about a miracle cure. I look after an old horse, and his leg was very badly injured around the fetlock. All the flesh was protruding from a long wide gash. The owner has always been extremely 'shy' of spending any money on him, especially as he is of 'no use' due to age. In desperation I called at the local feed store and bought some spray ointment; the man serving mentioned in passing just before I left: 'Try soaking the bandages in honey'. For two to three days I bathed his foot in warm Dettol water and sprayed on the ointment and bandaged the wound twice daily. It really smelt terrible and looked repulsive. At night I lay in bed worrying as it was getting no better and was green looking. So I got up the next morning and put a huge smear of honey right along the wound and dressed it. That evening there was no smell at all and the wound was a lot cleaner than ever before. I could not believe it. The difference was unmistakable. After a further two weeks of this treatment, the horse walked away while I was trying to bandage his foot, letting me know 'it's okay now, don't worry about the bandage'. I made a net bandage with elastic sides that puffed out to stop the flies settling on the wound. It lasted one day, then he rubbed it off, but this was long enough for a 'skin' to form on the wound. I hope this helps someone either now or in the future. It certainly was a 'gift' in all respects, for me and for the horse.



Is anyone living a lonely existence on a wild wind-swept beach with no power or services? I would like to write, as I grew up in similar circumstances and would love to reminisce.

Mari,

PO Box 27, KOOTINGAL 2352.

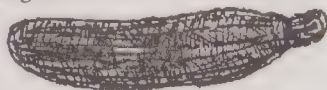
Mari, we haven't been able to track down an article on solar hot water from Owen in WA. You might be interested in how to obtain free hot water by running pipes through your compost heap – GR 159. Thanks for the honey tip. We've often heard of honey's remarkable properties and are so glad this poor old horse now has relief from his wound.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear Megg,

After seeing you at the Seymour show I decided after three years of reading to write, so here goes.

As a chef by trade, I love to cook. As a mother of two who works and has a veggie garden and seven acres, I scream that I



don't have the time to read or cook things that are complicated. So I try to use one good recipe to make more than one thing. If zucchinis or carrots are coming out of your ears, I have three good cakes that you can use either of them in, so if you don't have one, add the other or even half of each.

To make a **SWEET CAKE** you need 1½ to 2 cups sugar or 1 cup honey, 3 eggs or 5 egg whites, several cups sifted self-raising flour (stone-ground works well, as do gluten-free varieties), 1 tablespoon baking power, 2 cups grated zucchini or carrot, 2 teaspoons vanilla essence, 1 cup chopped walnuts (optional, can use almonds), 3 teaspoons cinnamon, 1 cup canola oil.

Put all ingredients into a large bowl, except for flour. Mix well, then add enough flour to form a thick batter. Spread into a roasting-pan-sized tray, please spray first if it is not nonstick. Cook for 60 – 75 minutes at 150 to 160°C or until golden-brown and firm like a cake.

For a **ZUCCHINI SAVOURY LOAF** use the same recipe as above, but leave out the sugar or honey and change the self-raising flour to plain flour, but don't take out the baking powder. If you have any cold roast meat, chop it up finely and add it to this recipe as it makes it taste great, about 1½ cups will do it. As before, mix it all together and cook for 60 – 75 minutes at 150 to 160°C. It will be golden-brown and firm just like a cake mix.

For **ZUCCHINI BREAD** that has a bite, using the same recipe, take out the sugar or honey and change the flour to plain, add 2 teaspoons of ground ginger and 1 – 2 teaspoons of dried chilli flakes. How much chilli you use depends on your taste, so start with a little and add more next time. As before, you can add 1½ cups of cold roast meat or salami chopped finely to add to the flavour. Mix well and cook as for previous recipes.

These last two breads are great as picnic snacks or for a different lunch, but I love them with dips and salad. For those of you who are not interested in adding meat, add some sun-dried tomatoes chopped finely, as this tastes even better.

JD.

Dear JD, thanks for the recipes, they sound yummy. We'd love to read about the mud-bricking you mentioned in your letter, but, unfortunately, you forgot to include your contact details. Please get in touch.

Dear GR Readers,

I am looking for a way to make **BEEF JERKY** without a dehydrator. I did have a recipe once, but have lost it. Any help is much appreciated.

Catherine Paynter,

PO Box 581, PT AUGUSTA 5700.

Dear Grass Roots,

I have been enjoying GR for over 20 years now and at last put pen to paper. Can anyone tell my why there are **SLATERS** in plague proportions in my **WORM BIN**? I have tried putting dolomite on the top and keeping the bin very moist, to no avail. At least there are none in the garden!

Also, I am looking for a large **DRUM CARDER** for processing woollen fleece. Perhaps there is someone who no longer uses theirs. I would be happy to pay.

We have a small hobby farm, with vegetable gardens, herbs, a large greenhouse, room for pets and poultry. Native wildflowers and plenty of bird life abound and we are very close to both the

fresh, calm waters of Peel Inlet and the Indian Ocean. We are 25 kilometres south of Mandurah and 70 kilometres from Perth and are interested in **HOME EXCHANGE**. Our preferred area would be around Sydney and outskirts. Is there anyone interested in experiencing a GR life in the west on a semi-rural property?

Lori Horner,

PO Box 5393, FALCON 6210

Dear Readers,

I have been reading a lot about the health dangers of **SOY PRODUCTS** and am in a quandary because I've also read good things. Can any readers clarify this situation with factual information, not unsupported claims or scaremongering?

Jane Cowan,

GEELONG 3220.

Jane, we too have been puzzled by conflicting claims, but have seen recently that fermented and sprouted soy products are healthful while those cooked conventionally can cause problems to some people.

Dear GR Readers,

For Marjorie Bligh's **PAIN IN HER EARS**, try massaging the web of skin between your fingers; this is called hand reflexology and is connected to Shiatsu therapy – Chinese health systems.

Tony Crossley asks **CAN HAIR BE REGROWN** (GR 167)? Again, I refer to reflexology. Try buffing your fingernails against each other at high speed two to three times per day. In addition, make an infusion of nettle tea to apply to the scalp.

I also have a question: how does one make candles?

Love the magazine, it is full of treasures.

Meg Johanson,

8 Second Ave, JANNALI 2226.

There was quite a comprehensive article about candle making in GR 112. Back copies are available for \$5 incl postage (see page 82 for how to order). Alternatively, your local library should have, or be able to obtain, relevant books.

Dear GR,

I'm hoping readers can help me with a **RECIPE FOR A SEED CAKE**.

Recently I was in a small café and tasted a lovely slice of seed cake. I begged the hosts of the café for the recipe because my 14-month-old daughter, who is a very finicky eater, loved it, but unfortunately (and understandably) they refused my request. I went back again and purchased another piece to take home and dissect to get an idea of some of the ingredients, which as far as I can tell included the following: soy products (the shop keeper told me that), ginger pieces, sultanas, sesame seeds, linseeds, pumpkin seeds (are pepitas a form of pumpkin seed?), sunflower kernels and other ingredients no doubt. The cake's consistency I can only describe as chock-full of yummy bits, with only enough flour to hold all those yummy bits together. It was topped with flaked almonds. If someone out there has a recipe that includes these ingredients or similar, I would be most grateful for a copy.



Julie,

PO Box 1430, MELTON WEST 3337.

Julie, pepitas are pumpkin seeds. Re the seed cake: try using a basic cake recipe and throwing in a handful each of all the goodies. You can usually halve the sugar.

Please keep letters brief, clearly written and relevant to self-sufficiency topics. Letters pushing barrows (religious, political or other) will not be published.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear Megg & Mary,

Can anyone help me? I am trying to **PURCHASE A CHIP HEATER** in good working order and complete, or a detailed diagram of a chip heater, so my son, a fitter and turner, can fabricate one for us, if all else fails. Any help to track one down would be great.

Krès & Pam Dubbin,
51 Allinga St, COOMBABAH 4216.
Email: krespam@aapt.net.au

Dear Grass Roots,

I have been a regular reader of GR for four years now and found most articles interesting. I am after a particular piece of information: a contact number for people who want to **HOUSE-SIT** for people who go on holidays. All information would be appreciated. Please write care of GR.

David.

Dear Grass Roots,

Although I have been a reader of GR for more years than I care to remember, this is the first time I have written. The letter from Jack Miller asking for info on **CHARCOAL SAFES**, however, has prompted me to attempt some help.

As a 'farm boy' in the late 1930s and '40s, I clearly remember my grandparents purchasing a charcoal safe, probably after having read an advertisement in the ubiquitous *Land* newspaper. While I cannot give exact dimensions, the device appeared to be about 1.8 metres tall, 1.5 metres wide and the same depth. It stood on legs that gave it a ground clearance of about 300 millimetres and each leg stood in a small container like a jam tin, which was kept filled with water to keep ants and other tiny invaders away.

The framework was possibly of 50-millimetre angle iron or (less likely) of 50 x 50-millimetre timber (quite solid), and had bird netting fixed over it on all sides. The top sloped in a flat pyramid to the centre, only about 75 millimetres higher than the sides, and had a water reservoir at its peak, which probably had a capacity of about 9 or 10 litres. It was galvanised, round, and perhaps 300 millimetres in diameter, with gauze wire across the top to keep insects out, and had to be topped up regularly.

In the centre was a galvanised iron 'box' big enough to allow at least 300 millimetres of charcoal all round, top and bottom as well. There was an access door in the front, which was also as thick as the side walls, lined with galvanised iron. I doubt whether there were any seals around the door, but it fitted closely and the thickness tapered from the outer edge to the inner, to allow the door to open without fouling the sides. I would guess that the roof of the chamber was also angled, curved or otherwise sloped, to prevent water from pooling on it.

The space around the central box was filled with charcoal and water from the reservoir dripped or seeped slowly throughout, the resultant evaporation cooling the central chamber and its contents. Perhaps the water dripped into the anti-ant containers to keep them filled, if the design allowed that and there was sufficient excess water to drain that far down, but that's only a guess.

The contraption was a rather cumbersome affair and stood in our dairy, just outside the kitchen, where it received good air circulation. It worked satisfactorily for milk and cream, and the butter and cheese that my grandmother used to make, and probably kept cooked meat for a few days as well.

As a side comment, the dairy was of simple construction of four log corner-posts, brick-paved floor, chicken wire 'walls', corrugated iron roof thickly insulated with eucalypt branches, weighted down with light logs. As the litter rotted down, it was replaced with fresh branches and it all worked quite satisfactorily.

The safe disappeared to a destination unknown (perhaps a

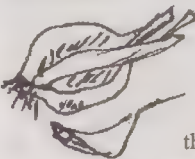
neighbour bought it) in the late 1940s and was replaced by an Electrolux kerosene refrigerator, a source of great wonder and probably envy to some of our neighbours for a time!

I hope the above may be of some assistance to Jack and to anyone else who might consider building one; it wouldn't be too difficult.

James Chaundy,
PO Box 34, TABULAM 2469.

Dear Grass Roots,

I have been a GR subscriber for approximately 10 years, so as I am getting on in years I thought I would pass on a few tips I have learnt over the years. For **BOILS, PIMPLES AND ACNE**, eat a piece of nutmeg (must be from whole nutmeg). The skin will clear in no time.



GARLIC SPRAY – use for fruit trees.

Boil 90 grams of chopped garlic in 600 millilitres of water, strain and add a dessertspoon of soap powder. Spray trees as required, the soap helps the garlic stick to the foliage. Planting garlic between rose bushes prevents aphids.

To make **MARMALADE**, cut oranges or other citrus fruit in half, squeeze juice and retain. Boil halves in a little water until tender, then scrape out all pith etc. The skin will slice thinly easily. Add the same weight of sugar and juice, then boil with a little water until set. I call it golden shred marmalade.

Clean **PAINT BRUSHES** with a small amount of petrol; this is much cheaper than paint cleaner.



I read a letter in GR 168 from Ally Young enquiring about jerky, I have written to him direct, however, I would like to send the information to you for the benefit of any other readers. **JERKY IS DRIED MEAT**, the bought variety has no salt, which I find tasteless (like cardboard), therefore I make my own and buy my meat from Bi-Lo as I find them very cheap. I normally buy a whole rump (about five kilograms), cut off a decent piece for a roast or to make sausages. The remainder I cut into five-centimetre slices – with the grain – then into four-centimetre strips. Put the strips in a clean bucket with a handful of salt and some pepper (optional) plus a good pour of Worcester sauce. Mix it all thoroughly, then leave covered with a cloth to soak for 24 hours. Remove meat and leave to dry in a fly-proof container for approximately a week, when it should be ready to eat.

I made my fly-proof container quite easily as follows: Purchase a plastic container with lid (about \$2). Cut the bottom of container out, drill 1/8" holes round the perimeter, stitch a bag made of flyscreen to the container, using the holes drilled. Make a handle at each end for hanging; I used wire hangers. Use pieces of wire as skewers to thread the meat onto, leaving space between pieces. Fix in position, place cover on top and hang in a suitable dry, airy place for about a week. This jerky is much cheaper and tastier than the bought variety.

To **GROW SPROUTS** drill a lot of small holes in the lid of a large coffee jar. Place one dessertspoonful of mung beans or similar into the jar, cover with water and leave for 12 hours, then wash and strain. Leave again for 12 hours, and repeat. After two days the sprouts should appear. I continue washing and straining until sprouts are to my liking. I do mine whenever I am in the kitchen, therefore find the best place for the jar is on the kitchen sill. The sprouts keep indefinitely in the fridge providing they are rinsed at least daily.

Lionel Arendt,
PO Box 50, PANGIL 3597.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear GR People,

You asked for info in response to a Feedback letter about some of the difficulties oldies faced in regard to physical/legal/insurance problems and so forth. Though I'd usually not endorse a commercial product, I thought that Australian Pensioners Insurance (API) would cover a lot of the issues raised. For the record, I have nothing to gain in this.

I'd never even considered insurance for any reason until six months ago. When I did so, I researched all the aspects of what was on offer, including price, though value was the criterion. Settled on API for all sorts of reasons. Apart from being the cheapest (I insure my house and contents – new for old replacement etc for \$243 a year, monthly direct debit, less if one also insures one's car.), they are easily the most user-friendly. When you ring, an actual (friendly, older) person sorts out your worries. Moreover, they offer a number of free ancillary services: legal assistance over the phone, plus free home emergency service (tradesmen) 24/7. Other services are, apparently, in the works. They really seem to have a grasp of what older people need. Comparing them to your current insurers is a fair indicator. Ring and ask for their brochures; I hear they live up to them.

'Doodles'.

Dear Fellow GR Readers,

A quick thanks to all those who responded to my letter (GR 166). I accidentally omitted the word 'nit', when I said that I had been combing our heads with conditioner. I was, in fact, using a metal nit comb. It did work in the end. At the time, however, someone we knew was being less than truthful about their own children's scalps (that's why I was, I thought, fighting a losing battle). We got rid of them about a month before the baby was born (5/11/04 – 8 lb 10 oz). The letters are still coming.

Now, I need to know something from DIYers about converting existing roof space (a huge waste of unused space) into a couple of rooms (or one room). My eldest is approaching adolescence and her current room is only a little bigger than our laundry; there's no room for a desk for that much-needed quiet study time. I know about permits etc, just need to know about the manual stuff. I have read lots of books and mags about owner building over the years, but would like some tips about what has worked and what hasn't.

I also have a troublesome knee. I injured it on a school camp when I was 12 years old (I'm now 32 years old). It gets stiff and sore and aches in cold weather. There's been a lot on glucosamine in the media, but does it work?? I am a single mum, so expensive treatments (I'm talking in the \$100+) are out. I'd rather use my money for my kids or on the house than something that might or might not work.

Kristina Greenwood,

7 Christine St, MILLGROVE 3799.

Dear GRs,

Someone once said 'build a better mouse trap and the whole world beats a path to your door'. Design really is everywhere, from buildings and streetscapes to furniture, cars, clothing and gardens; it's everywhere and on everything and can be applied by anyone, from the sewing room to the backyard shed. In fact, as the ABC TV programs 'Secrets from the Shed' and the 'New Inventors' showed quite clearly, some really good projects come out of backyard sheds. It doesn't have to be revolutionary, just something that works better or even looks better. It needn't cost the earth, especially by using recycled materials. Mistakes won't cost too much either. It's also challenging solving the problems that often occur with new ideas. Best of all it's the chance to indulge the creative



impulse. At this point some readers might be wondering what all this has to do with self-sufficiency. Well, if you intend embarking on a sea change, you will have to think about design – the lie of the land, housing, gardens, permaculture, livestock units etc etc. This is exactly where **DESIGN SKILLS COME IN HANDY**, especially if you find the commercial products too expensive for the pocket. You might have little choice but to design and build your own needs. It really is a very exciting field – get involved.

I had great fun building this **ANTI-BROOD COOP**. I don't scavenge from building and construction sites any more as I found a local supply for my timber. The stuff comes from an Indonesian glass-works; some is good hardwood, some quite soft and perhaps unsuitable for outdoor use, however, it's very cheap, though full of nails. For \$30 – 40 I get enough timber for three to four projects.

One thing that surprised me was that after clearing the site of the old chook run of fencing, star posts, netting

and chook house, the soil was chock-a-bloc with worms. A permanent run is not ideal, but I never had a problem – there were no lice and I only lost one bird to ill health. The run was always covered with prunings, clippings, palm fronds and banana trash, so there was plenty of scratchability in the 13 x 2-metre area. There was good shade and dappled light. Housing lots are getting smaller these days due to land prices, so a permanent run may be the only option, still, it worked for me and, with good planning, could work for others.



Alan Stewart,

12 Weymouth Pl, ALEXANDRA HILLS 4161.

Dear GR,

Having recently received a copy of GR, I was interested in the article 'Understanding Snake Bite' by Vic the Vet. Many years ago my dad had a beautiful **COLLIE DOG BITTEN BY A LARGE BROWN SNAKE**. An old Aboriginal near us at the time immediately carried the dog to a nearby creek, threw the dog in, holding his head out of the water. Half an hour later the dog walked back to the house with no after effects. Since that time I have had several other dogs bitten by king brown or red belly black snakes and have tried the water treatment with 100 percent success. I was told by an old Aboriginal tracker that this was how they treated their own people for snakebite. Hope this of some interest to you.

Selwyn,

12 Mouatt St, MONTRO 4630.

Anonymous letters will not be published. Please indicate if you would like personal details to be withheld.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear Grass Roots,

Would you be able to assist me with an article that appeared in GR some time ago re buying a **COW'S HORN** to produce a powerful fertiliser? This practice was brought to my attention again recently on 'Landline'.

I would like to offer a hint to mums who have young babies suffering scalded bottoms and **NAPPY RASH**. My daughter's first baby developed a staph infection on his bottom while they were still in hospital. His skin was falling off in lumps and he was a screaming, miserable little mite. He screamed each time he passed urine. The doctor prescribed a special cream that only made matters worse. On our first visit to the baby health centre the sister suggested cornflour sprinkled on the affected areas. Upon carrying out her suggestion we were delighted to see an immediate response and the condition cleared up within days. With every nappy change Vaseline would be applied. Cornflour would be used again if scalding recurred.

Doris Payne,

RMB 9260, Willow Grove Rd, WILLOW GROVE 3825.

Thanks for the nappy rash tip Doris. You are asking about biodynamics and we have published relevant articles in past issues. GR 116 gave an overview of biodynamics, GR 117 told how to make biodynamic compost and GR 121 discussed Brix testing in relation to biodynamics.

Dear Megg & Team,

I was reading Feedback and a lady, Ute from Bellingen, NSW, was asking about **FLAVOURED COFFEE MILK**. I believe the original recipe for the cake Marjorie Bligh gave in the previous GR came from SA. It used Farmers Union iced coffee, which is great. The recipe I have has four ingredients, the fourth being one teaspoon of mixed spice, but I have used others to give it a different flavour. A woman at the Salvos took out a quarter of the fruit and put in crushed drained pineapple, but took out the spice. You also have to wrap up the cake in a tea towel when it comes out of the oven, till it goes cold. This seems to make it last longer and stay moist longer, if it lasts that long.

You can try making your own iced coffee with two litres of milk warm enough to dissolve sugar to sweeten it, then adding a tube of coffee milk from Woolworths till you get the flavour you like, but I haven't used it in this cake recipe. I've used Paul's coffee milk and another milk product from Victoria, but can't remember the brand – it's in a plastic bottle. It doesn't matter if it's full cream or diet milk, either works.



Robyne.

Dear Grass Roots,

Hoping someone can help me with a recipe to **PICKLE WALNUTS**.

Betty Bailey,

27 Cassia St, BARRACK HEIGHTS 2528.

Dear GR Friends,

Can anyone tell me how to make **HATS AND PLACE MATS FROM BANANA LEAVES** or lemon grass? I have tried the library and the internet – no luck! I am looking for any ideas using **HERBS FOR CRAFT**.

Sandra Burke,

73 East St, MACKSVILLE 2447.

Dear GRs,

For one full year I kept a financial record of our chook keeping. We ate our free-range eggs generously and gave lots to acquaintances. We sold surplus for \$2 a dozen to our neighbour. We bought wheat pellets, which are very dear in Darwin. Sold the six

super laying hens prior to our New Zealand holiday. At the end of the year we had \$61 in the pocket plus super manure. So, **BACK-YARD HENS** are a very worthwhile proposition if you plan it well.

Ray Taylor,

39 Cardo Crt, DARWIN 0820.

Dear Team,

First, I would like to thank you for publishing my article ('Productive Suburban Lifestyle', GR 167); the kids got such a kick out of seeing their picture. They all had to take it to school. I was so pleased with the responses I got from such a wide area. I now have plenty of letters to write instead of just receiving bills.

I thought I would write and give everyone **AN UPDATE**. We found out a week before Christmas that we are expecting our fifth little angel in early August. Everyone is so excited. I've had some strange comments, but everyone's entitled to their own opinion. The garden is picking up now after the summer heat and we are all just trying to enjoy life.

I love writing letters so please drop me a line.

Julie Johnson,

6 Wallsend St, STANFORD MERTHYR 2327.

Dear Fellow GR Folk,

Again I write asking for help! I'm after a recipe to **PICKLE SLICED GREEN TOMATOES** in a brine. Is there anyone out there who can help me?

Love the verse in Feedback GR 167 from Lyn and Rob Sheppard.

Our village, Wards River/Gloucester area, has been blessed with gallons of rain, 225 millimetres, so it's green everywhere. This area is really blessed. We have not long come home from a camping holiday. We ventured to Echuca, West Wyalong, Parkes and Forbes. There are so many very, very dry areas, not a blade of grass only dead sheep. I certainly feel for farmers in the drought areas. I do casual work on a farm as a gardener. Our drought time is nothing compared to the west areas. Wish I could give them some of our rain.

Here is a recipe I'd like to share with everyone; it's simple and easy. My sons love it, as do the grandkids.

To make **LIGHT PANCAKES**, you need one cup self-raising flour, one cup water, one egg, three tablespoons oil. Mix all together. Cook the usual way for pancakes. Good for either sweet or savoury pancakes.

Joanne Yeark,

'Maggie Mae',

27 Bucketts Way, WARDS RIVER 2422.

Dear GR,

We would like to know if any readers have information on the **BLACK MILLIPEDES** that come out when it rains (and give off a nasty stink when disturbed). I have been told that this is an introduced species from Portugal, which has spread from SA to WA over the last 20 years. We live on a bush block in the Darling Ranges near Perth. Each time it rains we are inundated by these smelly little creatures and would rather not have to live with them, especially if they are foreign to our local soil. Any information would be welcome: origin, habitat, diet, predators, population control and breeding habits. The adult-sized millipedes we see range from 20 to 50 millimetres, have shiny black carapaces and a multitude of 'fluffy-looking' legs. They are dormant in dry weather, but emerge in their thousands at the slightest hint of rain. Is there an organic alternative to population control of these millipedes other than tap-dancing with thick-soled boots each time it rains?

Bindi and Chris,

65 Peet Rd, ROLEYSTONE 6111.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear Grass Roots,

Reading about the **TYRE HOUSE** built by Suzanne and David Alder (GR 166) motivated me to go down to our local tyre place and start a collection of my own tyres. They were only too happy to give them to me. The idea I had in mind was to build my horses two stables and a round yard out of them, but my question is: **HOW DO I STABILISE THEM** so they don't tumble over? We have two good dams, so we plan to render the stables with mud. Since tyres aren't very attractive, I thought with the round yard I could have tyres stacked four to five high, then fill with dirt and grow pigface, so it cascades over the tyres. So if any readers could give me some help on the best way (and cheapest) to stabilise the tyres it would be fantastic. Don't know if you all remember, but the last time I wrote to GR was regarding my sad letter about losing my black Labrador Gus. I never did find him, but now we have a female black Lab, her name is Lucy. Anyone know how to stop dogs pooing around the house area outside? She has 22 acres to poo on.



**Peta Stephensen,
RMB 788 Wilson Rd, MT BARKER 5324.**

Dear Family,

About 12 years ago, through an advertisement in your magazine, I bought seeds of a unique **HANGING CARNATION**. It grew so well that I happily gave away slips and plants to the many admirers of it, to the point where just one magnificent specimen in a huge pot remained. I became rather blasé about preserving it as it required little care and always survived its haircuts to become better and thicker than ever. However, during a recent spell away, roving dogs somehow knocked over the big high pot and scattered the contents. The poor old faithful plant lay naked in the hot sun all day before it was discovered. I dearly miss my old friend and have no idea of the firm where I obtained it, much less, if they are still in existence. Can you help me at all? Did someone specialise in such things around 1993-4? I am unable to check all back issues of GR in my library because so many have not boomeranged from borrowers. Hence, I can only turn to readers for help or advice. Can anyone direct me to a supplier of hanging carnations (which also make magnificent ground covers)?

**David Kaden,
6 Scarborough St, SCARNESS 4655.**

We love the sound of those hanging carnations David. What conditions do they need for growing in the ground? Are they hardy, drought-tolerant, frost-tolerant? Do they go dormant during winter? What colour are the flowers? Please tell us more, then, if someone can locate the supplier, there could be more customers than just you.

Dear Grass Roots Team and Readers,

We had a dream. Yes, we had a dream, to live in the country, a few acres of land and a dam, a vegie garden, flowers around and, of course, animals!

I am from Europe and fell in love with an Australian bloke! I decided to make the big step, left everything behind: mother, kids, other family members and friends. I packed my stuff, sold my car and other furniture, put my dog on the plane and came to Australia at the end of 1999, to get married for the second time in my life at the age of 52.

To avoid unwelcome approaches writers may indicate any personal details they wish to be withheld. Don't forget to put preferred contact details at the *bottom* of your letter. Letters are accepted and edited at the discretion of the publishers.

My new husband lived in a townhouse with only a back and a front yard, so for me, coming from the country, I longed for this sort of life again after seeing a lot of the area during our trips and discovering the most beautiful farms and houses with so much space around them!

Also, during the first year down under I discovered the beautiful magazine *Grass Roots*, which made the longing for me even worse. Anyway, after a long search looking for properties and saving for our deposit, we found a house on five acres between Ballarat and Bendigo. Only a house, with lovely trees around, but that was all; not much of a flower bed, no dam, no shed, no vegies. But we saw so many possibilities. With the help of WWOOFers, who visited our property regularly, and our own efforts, there came a big shed, a huge dam with a driveway around from the road over one side of the dam to the shed, a verandah over the whole length of the back of the house, a lovely picket fence, other fences and a windbreak with lattice and climbers growing up.

We made a vegie garden, with sleepers around the beds; my whole freezer is full! We planted fruit trees, native trees and others and flower beds, and built a lovely gazebo and greenhouse combination. Our carport next to the house became the new extension of the lounge, a new bedroom, en suite and walk-in robe.

We made a chook house and a big pen so our rooster and his harem are very happy. Our own three ducks are having fun with a group of wild ducks, splashing around in the dam where the vegetation is growing.



The whole place is now surrounded with flowers, shrubs and trees and it is lovely to have breakfast and tea outside and BBQs with friends. And then my husband got sick. Very sick. After several tests he went to the hospital for major surgery and when he came home we knew that he had less than two years to live. I don't want to go too deeply into the last years – the sadness, the grief and the tears we shed, the difficulties we both had to accept. My husband's dream was over. He passed away two months ago, after travelling up and down to hospitals for treatments, and at last he came to understand that it was all over. But in between his treatments, he was able to start and to finish his last dream: a fernery with a rock garden, a pond and water feature, pavers on the paths and everything covered with shade cloth for protection from the hot sun. The water is running down under the little bridge into the pond with goldfish. Now I am by myself, trying to keep up with the maintenance here. I have had a WWOOFer again, for a month, and he helped me out with a lot of work that had to be done. WWOOFers are a great help!

It won't be easy for me to keep going; there is so much to do and I have still to learn so much. The difference in the climate between here and Europe makes gardening not easy. The drought is hard to cope with for me, I have lost already so many plants.

I wonder if there are people around my age (50+) who have been in a similar situation to mine and who have good tips for me about gardening or how to keep my garden healthy without using poison. Maybe someone can email me, and I can write back. I would like to get some more friends to share with.

Tina.

Email: liesbeth@dodo.com.au

Dear Grass Roots,

I have drilled two holes in tops of drink bottles to water my plants. They drip for about two days. It works well for plants that are a long way away from taps.

**Margaret Dickson,
28 Bennet St, PORT MACQUARIE 2444.**

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear Grass Roots Folk,

It has been 50 years since I used a **CHARCOAL SAFE** and they were a cheap and effective way of keeping food cool. There is the initial cost of building, of course, but after that water and breezes will do the work for you. Charcoal, kept damp, keeps the safe cool, and you can make your own charcoal – I found instructions for doing this on the internet.

The food safe consists of an inner metal box (zincalume does not rust) any size you wish, but 600 x 900 millimetres is a good size and will allow for the number of shelves you need. The next step is to build a framework to contain the food safe and its charcoal surround. This consists of a wooden framework, for the sides and back, covered by heavy wire mesh. It must be of a size to allow for 100-millimetre cavity walls and have a solid floor.

The safe is assembled from the top. First, a 100-millimetre layer of charcoal is spread neatly on the floor and the food safe lowered into position. Charcoal is packed into the cavity walls and a 100-millimetre layer of charcoal is spread over the top. Now a metal tray, about 75 millimetres deep, is needed for the roof. This is filled with water and hessian bags or opened out potato bags are anchored in the water and allowed to hang down the full length of the sides and back. Capillary action will keep the hessian damp. It would be a good idea to lightly spray the charcoal with water at start-up.

The door consists of solid timber, of a size to cover the food safe, so a 100-millimetre timber return would be needed either side to support the door and latch etc, and legs will be needed to allow breezes under the safe. If the legs are stood in tins of water, ants will be kept at bay. So timber legs do not rot, they will need to be stood in a plastic container (cut-off milk bottles?) before standing in water tins.

The location of the safe is very important. It needs deep shade, open to the breeze, to work well. And don't forget to keep the water topped up. I hope this is of help.

Here is a recipe for **BEEF JERKY** that keeps well and is very tasty. You will need a food dryer of some kind, I used an electric model. Slice 500 grams beef into 5-millimetre strips. A marinade is made by combining 1/2 cup soy sauce, 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce, 1/2 tablespoon brown sugar, 1 clove crushed garlic, black pepper and curry powder to taste. Marinate for eight hours or overnight, drain well and put into the dryer and dry for 10 to 12 hours. Do not interrupt the drying cycle. Meat should be bendable or pliable when ready. Keep in a sealed container.

Dried beans keep very well in screw-top jars. Home-grown kidney beans last well over 12 months with no problem.

WEEVILS can be hard to eradicate. Screw-top containers are best for storing food and bay leaves have some effect. The best way to eradicate weevils is the search and destroy method. It helps if you have white walls in the pantry as the little grey moths are easy to see, as are their cocoons. As soon as you find weevils in the food, remove everything from the pantry or food shelves and search for moths and cocoons. Infected food should be put into a hot oven for a short while to eradicate moths and grubs. Search the shelves, the walls and roof of the pantry, and don't forget under the shelves as well, every few days until no more moths appear. Check every week or so.

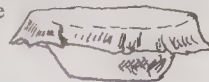
Countrywoman,
URALLA 2358.

Dear Grass Roots Mob,

I sent the following recipes to Marlene Hamilton, who inquired for such in a recent issue of your magazine, then I thought that the recipes may be of use to other readers.

I dug down into my archives and managed to find one of our old

recipes for **HOP YEAST USING POTATOES AND RAISINS**. Take 1 large potato, 600 millilitres water, 1 tablespoon sugar, 1 tablespoon plain flour and 1 tablespoon hops. Boil potato and add hops while still boiling. Then boil for 20 minutes. Strain and cool slightly, then add flour and sugar. Mix all well. Bottle and cork tightly. The yeast should work in a few hours if the bottle has been used previously. A new bottle will take 24 hours to work. A preserved fig or some raisins will help to make the yeast work, however, this yeast is somewhat unreliable and very tedious to make. I found a better approach was to make a **SOURDOUGH STARTER**, as follows:



You will need 600 millilitres of fresh unpasteurised milk. Stir in some plain flour plus a little sugar, making it thicker than cream. Cover with cheesecloth or similar and place on a windowsill in a draught exposed to outside air. The idea is to collect natural spores from the atmosphere; this would seem to work better in spring-time. In any event, within a couple of days the mixture should start to work, indicating success. Use about half this mixture to make the bread and replenish with flour, water and sugar, ready for next time. It may be necessary to attempt this idea on several occasions to obtain a satisfactory starter which is not too sour. Some time ago I managed to obtain such a starter, which lasted us literally for years before we graduated to a breadmaker and bakers' yeast. The sourdough bread never rises as high as plain white bread, but it seems to be more filling. Another handy hint for new chum bread makers is to use compressed bakers' yeast rather than dry yeast until you get the hang of the whole process.

Jeff Lowry,
RSD, HOLBROOK 2644.

Dear Grass Roots Family,

As I am in my late 60s and live alone, I have developed some ways to **KEEP ACTIVE AND INDEPENDENT**. My duplex is on a street corner, so I have a fairly large garden plus the footpath to mow. Murwillumbah is on the north coast of NSW, subtropical land, which means that grass grows wildly for eight months of the year. I bought a new, light hand-mower and really enjoy mowing, to the shock of many males passing in utes. It's great exercise, much more fun than the gym. There's no fussing with getting the motor to start or remembering to buy fuel. If I want a break, I just stop and there's no mower burbling away. I use an electric brush-cutter for the edges and if the grass gets too long to mow. Again, it's simple to use, and I only spent a total of \$200 on both machines. And I stay independent, which keeps me feeling young. I hope this assists others people with the same needs. Love the magazine, and always look forward to the next issue.

Barbara Waters,
1/1 Samuel Crt, MURWILLUMBAH 2484.

Dear Feedback,

For Jenny (GR 168). Re paper bricks: I recall a system of making paper bricks using a broom handle. The top of the broom handle is oiled for easy removal of the finished bricks. Paper is torn into strips 20 centimetres wide and placed in a tub of water. Wet strips are wrapped around the broom handle. Continue wrapping until brick is of desired size. Bricks could be held in shape with string or elastic bands. Slip finished roll-brick off broom handle. Store in a warm dry place to avoid fungus growth. Paper will shrink as it dries, becoming tighter. The hole in the centre of the brick will circulate heat and fire through it, ensuring complete combustion. Thin bricks could be used as firestarters.



Kel Connell,
KARUAH 2324.

The Day I Lost My Sense of Humour

by Maureen Larter, Cedar Party, NSW.



I had been looking at life on my 12 acres with a twinkle in the eye and a smile on the dial. Then, in February 2004, I spent several hours in full-scale panic and despair. I've discovered that my ride-on lawnmower is evil! For months it went from one problem to another. The motor wouldn't go. A friend put in a new motor. That didn't make any difference. The oil was getting into the petrol, the tyres wouldn't stay inflated and the summer grass kept growing.

My son Michael decided to try and fix it. Now Michael isn't especially talented where mechanics are involved, but he was able to put a new blade plate and blades on the mower. He then wheeled out the machine to the grass, sat on it and gave the ignition a turn. The mower coughed and spluttered. No go.

With his partner Gabrielle supervising on one side and himself on the other they took off the air cleaner to make sure it was clean. Michael sat back on the machine and tried again. Wow! It started. Then, as Gabrielle put the air cleaner on again, the motor began to die. Michael swung out of the seat and his foot slid under the mower. I watched from the back verandah.

You guessed it. A clunking noise made Michael look down to see what tool he had dropped. No tool. His foot, bare of shoes (after all he wasn't mowing, was he?) looked okay. Then he moved. Where there had been three

toes, were now six. He had cleanly cut through them horizontally. He sat down abruptly and couldn't move. Gabby yelled for me to ring the ambulance.

Now, with anyone else, I am basically in control. But with my son I just fell to pieces. Even as I write this my stomach churns and I relive the experience. Eventually, probably only a few seconds, but it seemed like longer, I called the ambulance and took a tea towel and pillow down to my prone son.

Gabby wrapped the foot as tightly as she could to stem the blood and we propped Michael's foot on a garden chair. He had begun to feel cold with the shock, but he consoled me, telling me to settle down and everything would be okay.

The 20-minute wait for the ambulance was agonising for us all. I continually jumped up and down and ran to the gate to see if it was coming.

When the ambulance finally arrived, the paramedics were wonderful. They gave Michael some medication for the pain. I followed the ambulance into the hospital and then to the emergency department. Michael was cool and charming to the nurses and doctors and Gabby and I were bright with nerves. Within three hours of the incident happening, Michael was in surgery.

Three months later Michael was off his crutches and finally into shoes. He didn't lose any toes, even though it was touch and go for several weeks. His foot looks almost normal again and, when he does any work, the steel-capped boots are on. What a way to learn a lesson!

So, beware. Lawnmower blades don't stop and respect our flesh. Whatever you are working at or on, please think of safety. Goggles, gloves and shoes are priorities.

FIRST AID FOR LOST DIGITS

- Calm and reassure the injured person. Lie them down, and position the head slightly lower than the trunk or elevate the legs to reduce the risk of fainting. If possible, elevate the

site of bleeding.

- Apply pressure directly on the wound. Use a sterile bandage, clean cloth or piece of clothing. If nothing else is available, use your hand.

- Maintain pressure until the bleeding stops, then bind the wound tightly with a bandage or a piece of clean clothing and adhesive tape.

- Don't remove the bandage. If the bleeding continues and seeps through the fabric, don't remove it. Instead, add more absorbent material on top of it.

- Squeeze a main artery if necessary. If the bleeding doesn't stop with direct pressure, apply pressure to the artery delivering blood to the area of the wound. Pressure points of the arm are on the inside of the arm just above the elbow and just below the armpit. Pressure points of the leg are just behind the knee and in the groin. Squeeze the main artery in these areas against the bone. Keep your fingers flat. With your other hand, continue to exert pressure on the wound itself.

- Immobilise the injured body part once bleeding has stopped. Leave the bandages in place, cover the patient with a coat or blanket to minimise shock, and get them to the ambulance or emergency room quickly.

- Save severed body parts and ensure they stay with the patient. Gently rinse the body part if the cut end is contaminated with dirt. Wrap in a clean, damp cloth, place in a sealed plastic bag and immerse the bag in cold water (ice water if available). Do not directly immerse the part in water or put directly on ice. Do not use dry ice. If cold water is not available, keep the part away from heat as much as possible. Cooling the severed part will keep it viable for about 18 hours. Without cooling, it will only remain viable for about four to six hours. ☘



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Warming Up To Winter

by Grace Bovalino, Thebarton, SA.

Wood heaters conjure up images of lazy winter days spent reading a book and romantic nights with loved ones by the fireside. Not only are wood heaters great for comfort, when installed and operated correctly they are one of the most effective and economical ways to heat your home.

TYPES OF WOOD HEATERS

There are three main types of controlled combustion wood heaters: convection, fan-forced and radiant.

Convection

Convection heaters are designed with air cavities around the outside of the firebox and then a decorative outer casing. The outer casing might be tiles, heat-proof glass, or painted or enamelled metal. The air rises between the two surfaces and expands, drawing more air from below and forcing the heated air out of the top of the cavity.

Fan-Forced

Fan-forced heaters are usually a convection style of heater, as above, with the additional feature of a two- or three-speed blower fitted. The blower increases the speed of the normal convection process, making these heaters especially suited to larger homes where air movement is a priority.

Radiant

Radiant heaters have all sides of the firebox exposed and are ideal for large open areas where heat can travel in a straight line, such as large family rooms or showrooms.

CHOOSING A HEATER

Consider Safety

Make sure that the wood heater you are intending to purchase complies with the Australian Standard AS/NZS 4013. This will ensure that you are buying a low-emission, clean-burning appliance. Ensure that your heater is installed by a qualified installer.

Consider Your Needs

Your heating requirements will depend on many factors, including where you live in Australia, the size of your home, how many windows you have, and how well your home is insulated. Discuss these matters with your retailer, who should be able to give you advice relevant to your specific needs, or contact the Australian Home Heating Association (see details below).

EFFECTIVE HEATER USE

You need to manage the fuel, the fire itself and the flue correctly to ensure your wood heater gives you maximum performance with minimum emissions.

The Fuel

- Only burn dry, well-seasoned wood, and never treated or green timber.
- Store wood in a crisscross fashion under cover.
- Never use petrol, kerosene or oil to start the fire.
- Buy wood from a reputable supplier so you can be assured it has been correctly harvested.
- Store wood for at least six months so it is quite dry before burning.

The Fire

- Use kindling wood, paper and firelighters to get your fire started. Add larger pieces of wood only after the red-hot coals have been established.
- Build a small fire regularly and provide plenty of air.
- Keep airslide fully open for at least 20 minutes after refuelling.
- Always remember: a little air avoids a lot of smoke.

The Flue

• Check your flue for smoke. There will be some smoke when you start and refuel, but this should last no longer than 10 to 20 minutes. If smoke continues, the fuel may have been incorrectly loaded or the air supply may need adjusting. All models are slightly different – check your



manufacturer's instructions.

- Make sure that your flue complies with minimum height requirements. Guidelines are available through your local council.

More Information

Through the Australian Home Heating Association you can obtain a 10-minute educational video called 'Clear Skies'. This contains tips and information on how to get the most out of your wood heater. Phone: 08-8351-9288. The AHHA website also contains much helpful information: www.homeheat.com.au ☎

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Dying For A Drink

by Jane Smith, Kilsyth, Vic.

Her toddler grandson was just recovering from a severe bout of vomiting and diarrhoea (gastroenteritis), my friend told me when we met at the local post office. Getting fluids into the child was something her daughter found to be almost impossible to do, yet the dangers of dehydration worried her.

With the toddler in her arms, the young mother went to the freezer and took out a tray of homemade icypoles to give one to an older child. The toddler stopped crying at once and reached towards the icypoles, making it plain he wanted one.

'Go ahead, give him one', the grandmother had urged. 'It's fluids, no matter how he gets it down, and you made them yourself, so you know what's in them.'

The toddler eagerly sucked the icypole to its end and demanded another. No vomiting followed and it was apparent he'd found his own way to replace the fluids his little body so badly needed.

From the point of view of an adult not long recovered from a bout of the same illness, I listened with intense interest. Living alone as I do, severe

dizziness kept me from getting off the bed long enough to prepare a much needed drink of any kind. Had I had a



tray of icypoles in the freezer, I thought, I could have grabbed a drink and enjoyed it while lying flat, the only position vertigo allows while it lasts.

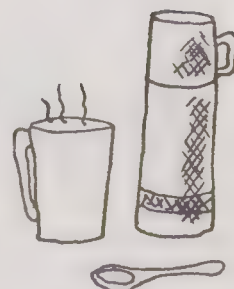
Walking home from the post office, I thought of other ways to prevent dehydration in varying circumstances. The sport drink bottle with its pop-up top comes to mind. Too good to discard after drinking its contents, it can be refilled and kept in the freezer in case of an emergency.

The refill could be made for use in illness by putting a pinch of salt and a teaspoon of honey into a jug, topping up with previously boiled water from a kettle, then filling the bottle and sealing it again before popping it in the freezer. Not too filled, mind, since water expands as it freezes!

I've seen marathon cyclists equipped with a clip-on plastic water container on their bike frames. There's a length of plastic tubing attached that provides the rider with a drink when needed. Now there, I speculated, would be a handy thing to have for getting a drink in all kinds of situations, from lying flat with vertigo to being unable to hold a cup steady for whatever reason.

An unsteady hand, in any case, needn't be expected to cope with a cup or mug of warm drink when beakers with secure lids are so available nowadays. Beakers are no longer 'kindergarten stuff' when coffee bars serve warm

drinks in take-away lidded containers. Beakers are just the thing to have on hand for anyone feeling a bit shaky.

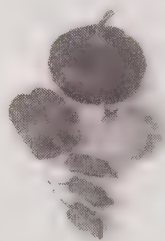


Then there are fluids that come in deceptively solid form. Calves' foot jelly, as it was called, always got a mention in old books on nursing the sick and in novels about country cottages. Calves' feet I'm not sure about, but a good substitute can be made by simmering meaty chicken bones and an onion in a pot of water or stock for a couple of hours. Season to taste with pepper and salt or added Vegemite, strain and put the liquid in the fridge to set into a jelly. Remove any solidified fat from the top when it's cold, and throw the fat to the birds, they'll love it.

This nourishing jelly can be spooned into a person recuperating from illness or injury, with a good chance that it will be retained and provide gentle nourishment. The jelly can be added to soup while heating and taken hot if desired.

The main aim is to prevent dangerous dehydration from setting in, whatever the cause, so it's beneficial to know of some alternatives we can use when there is the need for a drink. ☺

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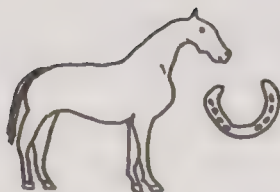
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KIDS PAGE

HORSES



Horses are fascinating creatures. They belong to the *equus* family, which means quickness in ancient Greek. There are more than 350 different breeds of horses and ponies. The main groups are light horses (such as Thoroughbreds), heavy or draft horses, ponies (such as Shetlands) and wild horses. Horses also come in many colours and each colour has a special name, for example bay is reddish brown with a black tail and mane and piebald is black and white spotted. The age and gender of a horse also gives it a special name: a stallion is a male, a mare is a female, a foal is a baby, a filly is a young female, a colt is a young male and a yearling is a foal after its first birthday. Owning a horse is a big responsibility because they need a lot of time and cost lots of money for grooming, exercising, feeding, shoeing, sheltering and vet care. Of course, there is riding equipment to consider too. The average life span of a horse is 20 - 25 years.

WORD SEARCH

Find the following horse-related words: bay, bit, boot, bridle, canter, colt, eye, fancy, filly, float, foal, gait, gallop, gelding, girth, hack, hay, hoof, mare, oats, saddle, pastern, pinto, ponies, reins, roan, rodeo, Shetland, shod, show, stall, stallion, trot, vet.

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RECIPE

Know a horse that's tired of apples? Make up a batch of these delicious horse treats!

Whinny Bars

Ingredients

- ★ 2 cups oatmeal
- ★ ³/₄ cup grain
- ★ 3 cups bran
- ★ 1 cup molasses



Mix oats, grain and bran together in a bucket. Drizzle molasses in while mixing with your hands (it should be a bit like the consistency of play doh).

Put handfuls of mixture on a baking tray and bake at 180° C for about 10 minutes. Store in an airtight container.

BOOK REVIEW

Horse Care: Tack, Grooming, Welfare

By Marion Curry

This book provides basic beginner's information about horse ownership, care and riding. Each category is presented in an easy-to-understand bullet-point format. The book would be a very good introduction for youngsters considering a horse for a pet. P/b, 40pp, Miles Kelly Publishing, C/- Bookwise International, PO Box 2164, Regency Park 5942. Ph: 08-8268-8222. RRP \$7.95.



DID YOU KNOW?

- ★ Horses often sleep standing up.
- ★ Foals are born with their legs almost the same length as when they are fully grown so they find it difficult to reach down to eat grass.
- ★ The oldest known horse was an English barge horse who lived to be 62.
- ★ A mare is pregnant ('in foal') for eleven months.

Q. What do you call a horse that lives next door?
A. A neigh-bour.

Q. Why couldn't the pony talk?
A. Because he was a little hoarse.



IN THE KITCHEN

If your young cockerels are starting to make trouble in the fowl yard, now is the time to act. Here are some tasty and warming winter chook recipes to inspire you.

MOORISH CHICKEN SOUP

- 1/2 tsp saffron threads
- 1/4 cup boiling water
- 4 chicken drumsticks
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 3 tbsp grated ginger
- 2 x 400 g cans chopped tomatoes
- 1/2 cup green lentils
- 2 cups chicken stock
- 1/3 cup long grain rice
- juice of 1 lemon
- salt and pepper
- 1/2 cup fresh coriander, chopped

Combine saffron and boiling water and leave to infuse for 5 minutes.

In a large saucepan, brown drumsticks in a little oil for 2 minutes on each side, then put to one side. Add onion and garlic to the pan and cook over a low heat for 5 minutes.

Add ginger, dissolved saffron, tomatoes, lentils, browned drumsticks and stock. Bring to the boil then simmer for 15 minutes. Add rice and simmer another 15 minutes.

Stir in lemon juice and season to taste with salt and pepper. Add coriander just before serving. Serves 4.

Vegetarians: use vegie stock rather than chicken and replace the drumsticks with 3 cups chopped vegies.

POTATO & CHICKEN BAKE

- canola spray
- 1 kg baking potatoes, cut into slices
- 2 lge onions, thinly sliced
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh thyme
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 bacon slices, chopped
- 4 lge chicken marylands, halved
- 1 1/2 cups chicken stock
- 1 bay leaf
- butter

Preheat oven to 150° C. Spray a large, heavy-based casserole dish with oil, then arrange half the potato slices in bottom. Cover with half the onions. Sprinkle with half the thyme and season with salt and pepper if desired.

Heat olive oil in a frying pan, add bacon and chicken, stirring frequently, and brown on all sides. Transfer chicken and bacon to casserole.

Sprinkle remaining thyme over chicken, season, then cover with remaining onion slices and a neat layer of potato slices. Pour stock into casserole, add bay leaf and brush potatoes with a dab of butter. Cover tightly and bake for 2 hours, until chicken is very tender. Then remove cover and place casserole under grill until potatoes are golden and crisp. Serves 4.

CHILLI, BASIL & COCONUT CHOOK

- 500 g chicken breast fillets
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 med brown onion, finely chopped
- 2 sml red chillies, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup cooked pumpkin, in cubes
- 1 cup fresh basil leaves, shredded
- 2 tbsp fish sauce
- 1 tsp fresh coriander, chopped
- 1 1/2 tsp sugar
- 250 ml coconut cream

Remove any fat from chicken, and cut chicken into thin strips. Heat oil in wok, stir-fry onion and chilli until onion is soft. Add chicken, stir-fry until tender. Add pumpkin, basil, fish sauce, coriander and sugar and stir-fry for 1 minute. Add coconut cream, and stir until mixture is hot. Serve with rice, noodles or steamed green vegies. Serves 4.

EASY OPEN VEGIE PIES

- 1/2 butternut pumpkin, in cubes
- 1 sml head broccoli, in florets
- 1 zucchini, chopped
- 1/2 cup corn
- 2 tsp olive oil
- 1 leek, sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 250 g ricotta cheese
- 1 tbsp grain mustard
- juice of half a lemon
- 1/2 cup grated cheddar
- 2 sheets frozen shortcrust pastry

Preheat oven to 200° C. Steam the pumpkin, broccoli and zucchini until



tender. Heat olive oil in a frypan and sauté the leek and garlic. Transfer all vegies to a bowl and cool for 10 minutes. Combine ricotta, mustard and lemon juice and mix through vegies, then add half the cheddar. Season with salt and black pepper and turn gently to combine.

Place each pastry sheet on a lightly oiled baking tray and tip vegies on it in a mound. Top with remaining cheese. Fold edges around filling, pressing pastry folds together. Trim if necessary. Bake for 45 minutes, until pastry is golden brown. Makes 2 pies (serves 4).

PECAN & APPLE MUFFINS

- 1/2 cup oats
- 1/2 cup raw sugar
- 1.5 cups SR flour
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1/2 cup skim milk
- 2 tbsp butter
- 2 egg whites
- 1 green apple, grated
- 1/3 cup pecans
- 1 tbsp raw sugar
- 3/4 tsp cinnamon

Preheat oven to 180° C. Combine oats, sugar and SR flour in a bowl. In separate bowl, mix milks and butter. Add wet ingredients to dry. Fold pecans together with apple. Take a nonstick muffin tin, grease it (they are never completely nonstick), and spoon in 2 tablespoons of muffin mix. Top with pecan mix, then remaining batter. Combine cinnamon with sugar and sprinkle over muffins. Bake for 20 – 25 minutes. Makes 12. 🍴

Old-Fashioned Quince Jelly

by Gareth Adams, Wunghnu, Vic.

Some of the best memories of my childhood are of time spent with my grandparents and the very favourite memory is of freshly baked scones just out of the wood stove, served with home-made quince jelly and whipped cream. Just the fragrance of fresh quinces is enough to bring back these memories. I still use my grandma's recipe for making quince jelly; here's how.

Wash the quinces very well to remove all dirt and fluff. Roughly chop into halves or quarters. Place into a large pan and cover with water. Boil till quinces are soft but not mushy, otherwise they will block the cheesecloth bag and won't strain properly.

Once the quinces are soft I place them in a bag made of cheesecloth, tie a string around the top and hang the bag on a broom handle held up by two kitchen chairs so that all the liquid can be drained and collected. I usually leave this overnight to allow most of the liquid to drain out.

A great tip I was told the other day when buying some more quinces was to boil the quinces in a pillowcase to save excess handling when straining the liquid. Then you simply need to tie the pillowcase to the broom handle.

The next morning I measure the liquid and add a cup of sugar to each cup of liquid. Bring this to the boil, then reduce heat slightly so jelly isn't boiling too hard and allow to reduce by



Gareth not only makes his own jelly but also the stylish labels and caps.

about a quarter.

If you use unripe quinces, the jelly should set without too much trouble. If they were close to ripe, you might need to add lemon juice for its pectin content, which is what causes the jelly to set. Otherwise Jamsetta can be bought from the supermarket, but I prefer to try to set the jelly without this.

The jelly is about right when it starts to bubble up like soap suds. This is the time to remove the pan from the heat and pour the jelly into hot, clean jars. Allow to sit for a few minutes before putting the lids on. Leave jars to

cool before storing. The last batch I made took until the following day to set, so give it a bit of time.

On occasions I have had jelly that wouldn't set. If this happens to you, tip it all back into a pan and add more lemon juice. Bring to the boil again and reduce a little more. If it still refuses to set, use it as a syrup on fresh fruit or ice cream.

The same method can also be used for green apples that have been thinned or have fallen off the tree before they are ripe and would otherwise be thrown away. I would like to also have a go using pears. 🍷



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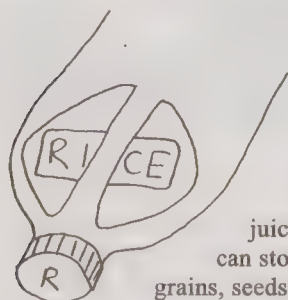
RECYCLING RUNS RIOT

Pantry Organisers

by Roberino, Arrawarra Beach, NSW.

Plastic bags are one of the most useful ever inventions for recyclers. I use them to store many items around the house, especially other containers that I might one day need.

Ten-litre plastic containers that have held drinking water are ideal for storing liquids or bulk grains and seeds. Don't pierce the container as directed if you intend to reuse it.



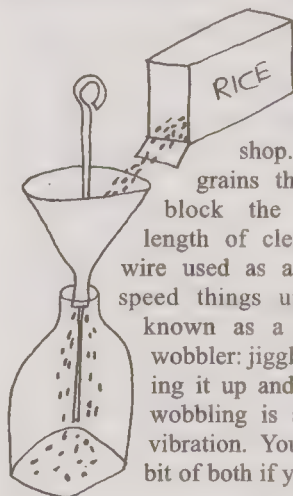
Plastic milk or juice bottles can store pasta, grains, seeds and any powdered foods. Children find breakfast cereals kept in milk bottles easy to handle. Those cellophane bags that split and spill food everywhere are no fun for anyone except the weevils.

The bottles can be stacked on their sides so the pantry shelves are more efficient. Label each container with masking tape and a laundry marker, or even just the laundry marker straight

onto the bottle. Colour-coding makes it easier to find items and to replace them in the correct spots after use.

Containers stacked with their lids and handles facing outwards are easier to access, especially for children. Place heavier containers at the bottom and lightweight ones, say popcorn or puffed wheat, at the top. Extra pantry shelves are quickly installed thanks to moveable DIY shelf supports that register into drill holes.

Always thoroughly clean and dry containers before reuse. Filling them is easy with a large funnel bought from a



discount shop. With some grains that tend to block the funnel a length of clean fencing wire used as a prod will speed things up. This is known as a jiggle or wobblor: jiggling is moving it up and down and wobbling is a sideways vibration. You can do a bit of both if you like.

RECYCLING SHOP

The Mildura region is benefiting from recycling and recovery facilities. Aroundagain is a material recovery and sales centre at the Ontario Avenue landfill that breathes new life into tonnes of goods being repaired and offered for resale. Other items are being dismantled for recycling and housed in a shed that was moved from the nearby airport to provide better workplace accommodation for employees. Aroundagain is an initiative of the Christie Centre, a not-for-profit organisation that develops meaningful work for its disabled clients in the region.

GREEN CREDIT CARD

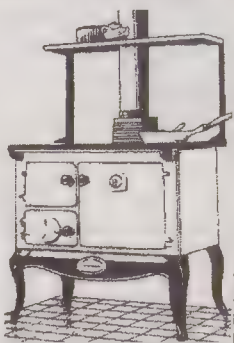
South Australian residents now have access to a green credit card that supports the state's nature conservation. BankSA will contribute a proportion of what cardholders spend on their GreenCard to the Nature Foundation SA, the Royal Zoological Society and Trees for Life. This is a great way of putting spending power to work for the environment and key projects have already been targeted by the state's three leading green organisations.

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Build A Hydraulic Ram

by Richard Deem, Cougal, NSW.

My wife and I recently moved from Queensland to a small farm in northern New South Wales. The locality is profoundly beautiful and our property has a strongly flowing creek on one of its borders. On a previous farm we'd had a house orchard and watching the seasonal cycles of the various trees and eating the fruit had provided us with such joy that we decided to plant another one.

To water the orchard we obviously needed a small supply of water independent of the house tank water, so I considered the possibilities presented by the creek. The property's main paddock is horseshoe shaped, bordered by the creek that flows all year round. The banks rise about 15 metres from the upstream part of the creek, sloping away across the paddock to about a 10-metre bank on the downstream side. Surely I could come up with a simple means of pumping a little water for our orchard.

I remembered having read somewhere about hydraulic rams and did some internet research. The Montgolfier brothers of France invented hydraulic rams in 1793 and they soon became widely used through Europe to pump water supplies to villages. Hydraulic rams are environmentally friendly, emit no pollutants and use only the energy of flowing water.

HOW THEY WORK

The operating principles of hydraulic rams are quite simple. Water is taken from a point upstream that is higher than the ram, travels down an inlet pipe and arrives at the ram under pressure. Water flows through the ram and returns to the stream via a one-way exit valve that is dragged closed once the water flowing through it reaches a certain pressure level.

With this exit cut off, there is a sudden increase of pressure, causing a shock wave in the ram that opens a one-way delivery valve and pushes water up into a pressure chamber.

When the pulse of pressure passes, the delivery valve shuts, preventing the water from running back, and the exit valve falls open, allowing the cycle to start again.

With each cycle the pressure in the air chamber builds up until the water pulses up the delivery pipe to wherever it is needed.

The supply head might typically be one or two metres, but it could be less than half a metre. With a two-metre supply head, the delivery head could be as much as 60 metres – in other words, potentially supplying a location 60 metres above the stream.

MAKING MY OWN

Inspired by the simple technology, I proceeded to construct one for myself. I first filtered the water intake on the inlet pipe by cutting a circular piece of stainless steel mesh from a kitchen strainer and forming it over the water inlet, fixing it with a stainless steel hose clamp.

The intake pipe for the ram was secured to the creek bed using large rocks. The moving rocks made an eerie clinking sound as they collided with each other under the water as I rolled them into position. I endeavoured to keep my toes out of the way because I knew that I too would make an eerie sound if the stones made contact with my cold bare feet.

Most hydraulic ram inlet pipes are made from inflexible material such as metal in order to prevent the ram from dissipating energy through a shuddering motion that will occur when using flexible material such as polypipe. The ram will still work using polypipe, but less effectively.

I visited a local plumbing supplies store and, once I inspired the salesperson by explaining the potential of the hydraulic ram to provide endless cost-free water pumping, we both set out to assemble the ram in the store.

Parts Needed

Proceeding from the inlet side to the exit, the parts purchased were:

- 40 mm valve and polypipe end connector
- 40 mm poly threaded nipple
- 40 mm threaded tee
- 40 mm brass swing check valve (fitted rising upward from the tee with the direction of flow pointed downward)
- 40 mm poly threaded nipple
- 40 mm brass swing check valve (fitted with the direction of flow pointed towards the exit)
- 40 mm poly threaded nipple
- 40 mm threaded tee

The following parts were connected vertically to the second tee.

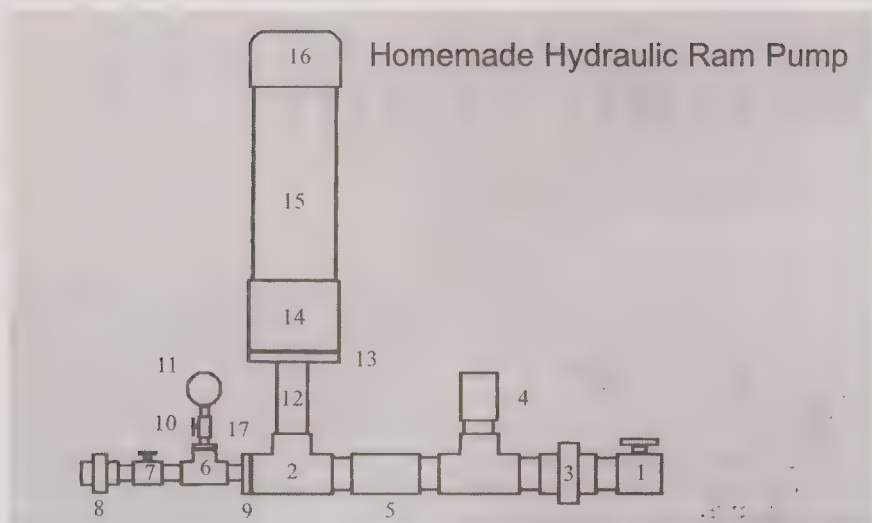
- 40 mm PVC connector
- 100 mm of 40 mm PVC pipe (which glue-joins to the pipe reducer and the 40 mm connector)
- 100 x 40 mm pipe reducer
- 700 mm of 100 mm PVC stormwater pipe
- 100 mm PVC stormwater pipe end cap

This was glued with blue PVC glue to the top of the pipe after an inner tube from a small motor scooter, partially inflated so as to be easily compressible, and occupying about one-third of the PVC compression chamber, was placed inside.

The following parts continued horizontally from the second tee.

(I omitted the pressure gauge, but it would be invaluable for fine tuning the pump.)

- 40 mm poly threaded bush reducing 40 mm to 30 mm
- 30 mm poly threaded nipple
- 30 mm polypipe end connector (a narrower pipe connector may be substituted here, such as garden hose)



Key to the Components

- 1 – 40 mm valve
- 2 – 40 mm tee
- 3 – 40 mm union
- 4 – 40 mm brass swing check valve
- 5 – 40 mm brass swing check valve
- 6 – 30 x 20 mm tee (optional)
- 7 – 30 mm valve
- 8 – 30 mm union
- 9 – 40 x 30 mm bushing
- 10 – 20 mm pipe cock (optional)
- 11 – 100 psi gauge (optional)
- 12 – 40 x 150 mm connector
- 13 – 100 x 40 mm bushing
- 14 – 100 mm PVC coupling
- 15 – 100 x 700 mm PR160 PVC pipe
- 16 – 100 mm PVC end cap
- 17 – 20 x 30 mm bushing (optional)

Assembling The Parts

When I got home I connected the parts firmly using white plumbers' pipe joining tape. The ram develops quite a bit of internal pressure, so the joints need to be strong.

I already had 30 metres of 40-millimetre polypipe for the inlet side and sufficient 30-millimetre polypipe for the exit side.

Parts bought from the plumbing supplier cost \$123.50, but when the pump clacked into life the thrill was worth it.

The picture shown is of a similarly designed ram, which appears on the Clemson University website.

More Useful Data

The Clemson University site also provided the following data.

- drive pipe size – 32 mm schedule 40 PVC
- outlet pipe size – 20 mm schedule 40 PVC
- pressure chamber size – 10.2 cm PR 160 PVC

- pressure chamber length – 91.4 cm
- inlet pipe length – 30.5 m
- outlet pipe length – 12.2 m
- inlet elevation above pump – 1.2 m
- elevation from pump outlet – 3.6 m

Expected water output will be approximately $\frac{1}{8}$ of the input flow, but will vary with installation fall and elevation lift as noted above. The chart below is based on 1.5 metres of lift per 0.3 metres of fall.

USING THE PUMP

In order to start the pump once the water is connected it is necessary to

use your index finger to manually open and close the first one-way valve. This starts the cycling motion that causes the ramming action of the water to pressurise the PVC chamber.

One evening I noticed that the pump had been relentlessly pumping water into my overflowing measuring bucket and I was reminded of a scene from a Walt Disney film where the Sorcerer's Apprentice lost control and the water supply couldn't be stopped. My pump didn't pose that sort of a threat though.

On another occasion I noticed about half a dozen small yabbie-like creatures about as big as a little fingernail had been pumped into the measuring bucket and I was pleased to contemplate that this machine could catch food as well as pump water.

One feature of the hydraulic ram is that both the pump and the intake pipe can operate normally while totally submerged. This might be a benefit if you are concerned about the water level rising suddenly, or are worried about the security of your equipment from theft.

When the ram initially commenced pumping, the flow was quite slow. The swing valve closed about every four seconds to herald another compression cycle. Accordingly, I decided to try to accelerate the flow of water into the ram inlet. To achieve this I decided to use a 20-litre plastic drum with the bottom removed, hoping it would collect and force into the inlet pipe a greater volume of water than the 40-millimetre inlet pipe would take normally. However, this did not improve the flow. Maybe the

PIPE SIZE AND EXPECTED FLOW

Drive Pipe Diameter (cm)	Delivery Pipe Diameter (cm)	At Minimum Inflow		At Maximum Inflow	
		Pump Inflow (litres per min)	Expected Output (litres per min)	Pump Inflow (litres per min)	Expected Output (litres per min)
20	13	2.8	0.4	7.6	0.9
25	13	5.7	0.8	22.8	2.8
32	13	7.6	0.9	37.9	4.5
38	20	9.5	1.1	56.8	6.6
51	25	11.4	1.4	124.9	15.1
64	32	45.4	4.1	170.3	20.4
76	38	75.7	7.9	283.9	34.1
102	51	113.6	13.7	567.8	68.1
152	76	283.9	34.1	1514.2	181.7
203	102	1514.2	181.7	3028.3	363.4

backwash effect of a larger volume of water trying to find its way into a small opening was the problem. I suspect that if I funnelled the water in properly, in an auger-like fashion, the inflow could be accelerated. I did not persevere with this though because a flash flood intervened, dislodging my water intake pipe, sweeping it downstream, and threatening to take everything with it.

I concluded that the flow from the available reach of the creek did not have sufficient fall to generate a strong enough hydraulic ramming effect. As an alternative, I considered that possibly I could run a 40-millimetre polypipe siphon across the main paddock. The siphon would operate from the higher section of the creek to the lower section on the other side. I imagined that setting up the siphon and connecting the hydraulic ram pump at the exit end could generate an endless flow of water and water energy.

It took a local plant operator to dash all of my hopes for a siphon-operated hydraulic ram. He observed that siphons did not operate in our area if the water had to rise above about 7.6

metres before discharging. I checked on the internet and learnt that atmospheric pressure will only support columns of water up to certain maximum heights – 10.3 metres at sea level – and the maximum height reduces the higher your locality is above sea level.

Despite the fact that my hopes of using the hydraulic ram in a novel situation and achieving something really exciting had been dashed, I did admire the plant operator's knowledge.

Possible Improvements

After considering the outcome of my first efforts, I would suggest the following improvements to my ram.

- Using rigid inlet pipe, maybe those large aluminium irrigation pipes would do.
- Running the inlet pipe beside the stream, not in it.
- Fixing a pressure gauge as shown on the Clemson diagram.
- Drilling a hole on the top of the PVC pressure chamber and fixing the inner tube valve through the top of the PVC pipe so adjustments to air pressure could be made.

Internet Resources

<http://atlaspub.20m.com/rampg.htm>
<http://animation.schou.dk/hydraram.swf>
 (good animated description of ram operation)
<http://www.rampumps.com/ram-pump-setup.html>
<http://www.lifewater.org/wfw/rws4/rws4d5.htm> (performance tables)
<http://www.cat.org.uk>
<http://www.lifewater.ca>
<http://www.marksnyderelectric.com>
<http://journeytoforever.org>
<http://www.solarelectric.com>
<http://www.homepower.com>
<http://virtual.clemson.edu>
<http://www.riferam.com>
<http://www.howstuffworks.com>

- Connecting smaller diameter exit tubing, such as 20-millimetre garden hose, to improve performance

Depending on the nature of the site, other variations, such as changing the pressure chamber dimensions, might also be necessary. ☺

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We believe God made all things, and that He is not happy with the way we humans go about our business today. Both men and women have been drawn into competition with one another, rather than being companions of a common cause, that of raising good children in a kind of tribal environment where there is a strong sense of identity and belonging. Swimming against the tide can seem like a lonely thing to do, but if you have faith to resist the strong delusions and the propaganda of our time, then you may be pleasantly surprised to find there are others just like you.

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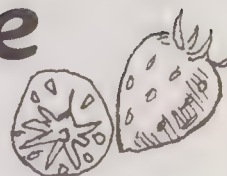
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Strawberries Galore



by Jose Robinson, Noosaville, Qld.

No, your berries won't be ripe yet unless you're in Queensland, but it is time to order plants and get your soil prepared.

Would you believe that the luscious red strawberry belongs to the rose family? Strawberries come from the genus *Fragaria* of the family Rosaceae. In Queensland, the largest strawberry-producing state in Australia, we grow strawberries for their yummy fruit, but some other countries grow them as a ground cover.

After fruiting, strawberries send out many runners, which can be used as new plants for the next season. Left to their own devices they can run wild and the fruit becomes tiny and dryish.

The wild strawberry, from which our cultivated fruit comes, is a small woodland species native to Europe, Asia and North America. It is termed a herb and produces pretty white flowers with five rounded petals, many stamens and numerous pistils.

For the past five years there has been an International Strawberry Symposium held in Europe, but in 2004 for the first time Coolumb on the Queensland Sunshine Coast was the host. Large growers exchange information about pests and diseases, management, marketing, nutrition and new cultivars.

The Camirosa variety is the most popular one grown, but there are many

others to choose from. Recently, four more varieties have come on the market: Sugarbaby, Rubygem, Harmony and Brighteyes. As yet these might not be available in all nurseries. One variety on the market is called the Everlasting strawberry and fruits twice a year, in winter and again in spring. The normal season in Queensland is from about June to October.

If you wish to grow strawberries in the home garden, be aware they are prone to quite a range of diseases, one being an aphid-borne virus that does not harm the plant in the first generation, however, it drastically and progressively reduces the yield of the offspring of the infected plants. If you can treat your plants to a seaweed brew every week or so, it helps to keep them healthy.

It is not a good idea to accept runners from a friend's garden, particularly if they are a few years old. They will in almost all cases be virus infected. It is better to buy good new stock from a nursery, which should be labelled 'propagated from approved material', meaning they are virus-free plants.

The soil needs preparation before you plant strawberries. Dig in chook manure and blood and bone. The herb borage is very compatible with strawberries, especially when used in a compost mix, as it accumulates silica and potassium. The best time to put in runners (in Queensland) is April/May. Select a warm well-drained spot that gets plenty of sun.

If you wish to keep your crop from lying in the soil and protect it from snails, slaters and other soil-borne pests, cover the bed with black plastic and mark out holes where you wish to plant. Then simply cut out holes with a sharp knife and slip each new strawberry plant into the hole. If you have trouble with birds, a bird net or mesh over the plants is advisable.

HERB & STRAWBERRY PUNCH

- 1 cup honey
 - 1 tbsp fresh rosemary
 - 1 cup lemon juice
 - 2 lt water
 - 2 punnets fresh strawberries
 - 1 cup lime juice
 - 1 lt mineral water or soda water.
- Heat honey, rosemary and half the lemon juice in 3 cups water. Bring to the boil and remove from heat. When lukewarm strain the mixture into a punch bowl. Purée the strawberries and stir them into the punch bowl. Add ice if desired. Pour in the rest of the water and remaining ingredients.

Growing in special strawberry pots with holes around the sides seems to suit some people. I haven't had much success with this idea, but give it a try. I find that if no space is available in garden beds a large tub does the job quite well.

Early herbalists claimed strawberries' medicinal properties were efficacious for many complaints. Some reportedly recommended strawberries for gout, choleric stomach inflammations and as a gargle for sore throats. Made into a tea, it was said to be good for diarrhoea. Some herbalists prescribed the fresh fruit as a laxative.

Strawberries have a full-bodied flavour with an excellent sugar-acid balance. They are super when lightly macerated in liquors such as Cointreau and Grand Marnier. Icing sugar, honey and brown sugar all go beautifully with strawberries. Plain ice cream and fresh mint leaves are great accompaniments. Strawberries are best eaten soon after picking. They can go soft and mushy after several days, even in the fridge. ☺

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Building With Second-Hand Timber

by Cameron Buchanan, Rosebud, Vic.

The decision to use second-hand timber in the construction of a home is something that is quite easy to evaluate. The first thing you must decide is the purpose or the application you are going to use the timber for. Is it to be used in the framing of the house, exposed roof beams, for window frames or even bench tops?

Some considerations must be made from the outset. If you plan to make bench tops or tables and the like, you must choose wisely because if the timber isn't dry problems can arise down the track. It will undoubtedly shrink, twist, cup, warp and split, turning your hard work into a pile of firewood.

NOT FOR FRAMING

For general-purpose framing I would not use, or recommend using, second-hand timber; there can be quite a few disadvantages, particularly with hardwood timber. In most cases it is easy to acquire used framing for nothing. Generally speaking, this timber will more than likely be OB hardwood. OB stands for off bench and it is certainly hard. Its strength increases over time and it can be quite common for even a nail gun to have difficulty entirely penetrating it. It is heavy to work with and hard on tools. On the few occasions where I have had to use second-hand OB I found that the old nails were still protruding from the face of it, mainly because it's near impossible to get

them out; this of course means you are unable to plane the timber straight if the need arises.

Old OB was cut to an imperial measurement of 4 x 2 inches; these days the metric equivalent is 90 x 45 millimetres, so there is a size discrepancy of 10 x 5 millimetres. This can be overcome if the entire wall is framed out in the same timber, but if you have to use both old and new you will have to pack the new studs to suit the size difference of the OB.

Pine Is Easier

The most common timber used in the framing stage of a home these days is plantation radiata pine. Radiata pine comes from the softwood family and is very easy to work with. It is clean and relatively odourless and is stress-graded in the factory. You will notice that radiata pine has spray paint marks along its length; this shows it has been graded. It also has a small black sticker on it to show that it was in fact grown in a plantation for the purpose of housing construction.

BEWARE TERMITES

Another, and more serious, effect of using second-hand lumber is the fact that you could be introducing termites into your home by transporting them from one destination to another inside the lengths of timber. Termite infestation can be very serious and sometimes

the effects of these subterranean menaces won't be noticed until it is too late as they eat timber from the inside out. They go about their business of devouring your home in silence!

DECKING AND FLOORING

Removing old nails from second-hand merbau decking is a slow and tedious job that can be very hard on the wrist. Notice in the photo that I am pulling the nails out through the bottom. Doing it this way rather than hammering them back through the original hole prevents the surface splitting.

Second-hand flooring can add to the character of a rustic home and the availability can sometimes be good. I would recommend trying to get end-matched boards, which are tongue-and-grooved on the ends as well as the edges. The advantage of using end-matched flooring is that the joints don't have to be over a floor joist.

The importance of correctly seasoned timber for flooring cannot be overstated. In the event that you are able to acquire a house-lot of flooring, either new or second-hand, you must allow it to sit and acclimatise in the area it is to be used. In the majority of situations this will prevent buckling and cupping.

The surface of a floor should be kept as free as practical from grit and other abrasive materials which, when walked upon, will damage not only the finish but the wood itself. Repeated scrubbing or washing with water should be avoided. If the floor absorbs water, it might expand and cup and, should water lodge in joints, it might decay.

Waxes and other finishes must be used with discretion for fear that they make the floor slippery.

USE YOUR IMAGINATION

There are some beautiful second-hand timbers available and using your imagination to utilise them as ceiling beams, bench tops, a mantelpiece, or even the top rail on a veranda can be very rewarding. ♪





by Emmie Browne, Dalwood, NSW.

Marvellous Macadamias

Before we became macadamia nut growers on a commercial scale we had one macadamia tree on a suburban three-quarter acre and it didn't grow in the 10 years we lived there. Our son's comment was: 'This tree doesn't fill one with confidence'.

We now know that this poor single tree was continually devastated by twig girdler and was growing (or trying to) in the wrong heavy clay soil. It was a novelty planted by a previous owner and never really had a future.

The macadamia is an evergreen tree best grown in a subtropical climate with rainfall of approximately 1500 millimetres annually, which must also fall at the right time: that is, after the racemes have set their crop of nuts in spring, so the moisture helps to fill them out to a good size with high oil content. The soil should be free-draining with high organic content. Poultry manure is an ideal fertiliser.

If a grafted tree is purchased from a nursery, it will be three to five years before the tree produces nuts, depending on the variety. The Australian cultivar, A4, is the most precocious, and needs more fertilising, with nuts forming in three years. Hawaiian cultivars take five years to bear. A mix of these two varieties gives good cross-pollination.

SPACING

Commercial plantings of 300 trees to the hectare need not necessarily be followed for a small number of trees. A

grove of 20 or 30 trees can be planted closer together, four by four metres, as hand-harvesting would be the norm for a few trees.

PESTS

Of course there are pests! The fruit spotting bug, the nut borer and the twig girdler are some you might have to contend with. The twig girdler is easily removed by hand. There are wasps that help control the latter two, but the fruit spotting bug does not appeal to most predators other than the assassin bug. Rats find macadamias a great food source and can eat through 10 nuts in one night, cleaning out the whole kernel through a small hole they have gnawed in the hard shell. Crows are helpful with rats as they pluck the young newly-borns from nests in trees, and so keep the population down.

HARVESTING

Harvesting is from the ground as the nuts drop at maturity, usually in their husk. Hands and knees is the only way to gather the nuts without expenditure for machinery. Crawling along with a bucket and emptying the harvest into a bin is a good method.

DEHUSKING

Dehusking should be done on the day of harvest, then the nut in its shell is placed on a drying rack for four weeks or more. To dehusk by hand is a formidable task and can be done with a sharp knife, or Stanley knife, to help the

splitting of the firm green husk. It is not uncommon for small-scale growers to bring buckets of nuts in the husk into the lounge room after the day's harvesting and sit, fairly relaxed, to split and remove the husk.

CRACKING THE NUTS

If you intend the nuts for your own use, a drying time of at least four to six weeks is essential so that cracking the thick shells is easier and more likely to result in a whole kernel. Commercially, nuts are dried down to three percent moisture to facilitate cracking.

It's a daunting task to crack a nut without mechanical means. There are hand-crackers available for doing single nuts, otherwise a vice is useful for cracking the shell, or a hammer over a niche in a hard surface.

Hand-operated huskers and crackers with winding handles are available, at a price that might not be justifiable for a small number of trees. A combined hand-cracker/husker, which husks 10 kilograms of nuts per hour, would cost approximately \$600, and the time for cracking the nuts needs to be factored in to that operation.

PRODUCING AN INCOME

If you are considering growing to create an income from local markets, you could expect one kilogram per tree after five years, building up steadily each season thereafter to 15 kilograms per tree. The average kernel recovery is 35 percent. Market value of the nut in the

shell would be \$3 to \$3.50 per kilo.

Like most tree crops, the waiting time for the macadamia to reach maturity seems long, but in the end the rewards are delicious, health giving and proudly Australian.

STORING AND USING

The oil content of the nuts is very high, so cracked nuts are best stored in a freezer or refrigerator to retain their freshness. The raw nut has the highest content of monounsaturated oil of any nut and is said to outclass olive oil in health-giving qualities. To dry-roast the nuts, an oven at 120° C for 40 to 50 minutes, with occasional stirring, is all that is needed to bring out the unique macadamia flavour for snacking. There are many recipes, both savoury and sweet, which are enhanced by the crisp caramelised flavour of the cooked nut.

Seafood Pasta With Macadamia Pesto

Pesto

- 1 cup chopped coriander
- 1/2 cup chopped parsley
- 1/4 cup macadamia oil
- 2 tbsp lime or lemon juice
- 3 tbsp chopped raw macadamias
- freshly ground black pepper

Seafood

- about 600 g seafood of your choice: prawns, scallops, salmon
- 1 tbsp macadamia oil
- 1/2 cup macadamia pieces

Pasta

500 g pasta, lemon myrtle fettucine is a good choice

Cook pasta in boiling water, to *al dente*. Blend pesto ingredients in a blender or food processor, set aside. Toss seafood in tablespoon of heated macadamia oil for about 2 minutes, then toss in macadamia pieces briefly. Add seafood mixture to pasta. Mix half the pesto through pasta. Serve with pesto topping. This is colourful, attractive, simple and truly delicious. Serves 4.

Filo Pastry Triangles With Fruit And Macadamias

- 3 sheets filo pastry
- macadamia oil
- 1/2 cup finely chopped raw macadamias
- brown sugar and cinnamon



cream, ice cream or creamed ricotta diced fruit or berries of choice

Lay a sheet of pastry on dry work surface. Brush lightly with macadamia oil and sprinkle with brown sugar and cinnamon, scatter 1/3 cup chopped nuts over. Lay second sheet of pastry over the top and repeat the oiling and sprinkling of sugar, cinnamon and nuts. Lay third oiled sheet over the top and sprinkle with remaining mixture of sugar, cinnamon and nuts.

On a firm board and with a sharp knife, cut the finished sheets into triangles. Place on a paper-lined baking tray and bake at 175° C for 10 to 12 minutes, or until golden. Transfer to wire rack to cool.

Serve one triangle on each plate, top with cream, ice cream or creamed ricotta. Spoon diced fruit or berries on top, then cover with a second triangle. This is an elegant recipe which belies its simplicity. Serves 4. ♡

Doing The Dreadful Deed

by Maureen Larter, Cedar Party, NSW.

Fred had to go. Charlie was enough for me. At 53, on her own, a lady just had to get her priorities straight. Even 12 acres was not enough room for all of us. Every time I walked out the back door, Fred flew at me. He hid in the shadows of the chook pen and attacked me from behind. He crouched on the chook house roof and aimed at my head. He stood arrogant and tall at the gate and stared me down. Kicking off a large rooster was no mean feat. The pity was, he was gorgeous, and Charlie, a golden bantam, paled into insignificance next to him.

Of course, that wasn't the only problem. It was me! I just couldn't bring myself to do the dreadful deed. This needed strategic planning. I kept putting off the inevitable but, by the time I had to carry a two-metre stick with me wherever I went, I knew the situation was out of control. I 'girded my loins' and strode out determined to fix this situation once and for all.

Of course, a middle-aged woman cavorting around the garden trying to catch Fred, who merely glared then flew and shrieked from one spot to the other, was not the most delightful of sights. I was left panting, while Fred puffed out his chest and I could tell he was thinking of more lines of attack. I gave up.

Some days later a friend suggested she send her son over to kill the offending bird. I readily agreed and a few days later he arrived. I proceeded to explain the difficulties that Fred posed. As he nodded and made a few sympathetic comments he walked out the back, had Fred by the scruff of the neck and was asking for the hatchet before I'd finished speaking. Within a short space of time, Fred was fertiliser for the garden and I dug a hole and buried him with full military honours. Well, I put him in the hole and quickly shovelled back the soil.

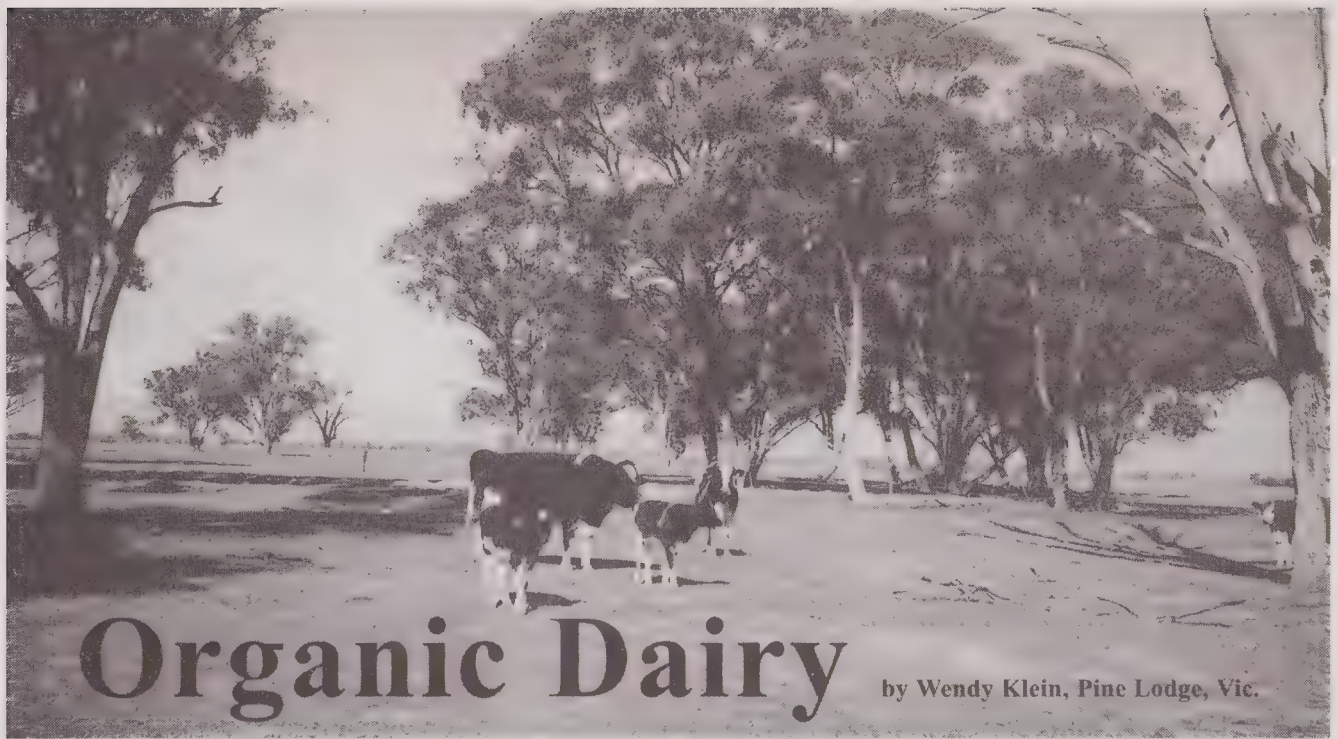


Now, you would think that would be the end of the story, but no, Mother Nature could see I needed a lesson. Charlie settled down with his harem, in due course the hens went broody and I was the proud mother of 12 chicks. Life was sweet. My son and his partner arrived with their dogs and we got down to starting our farm. The baby chicks began to grow. A couple died of exposure, two got chomped by our trusty guard dog Ninja, and a couple drowned in the drinking water. Still, I had half a dozen healthy chooks coming along to replace my geriatric hens that were living a luxurious life without yielding a thing for the dinner table.

It took about three months before it became glaringly obvious that of the six baby chickens, five were roosters and only one a hen. I watched in disbelief as Charlie became the lowest rung on the fowl class ladder. For his own protection I had to cage him away from the other boys, who were preening and crowing all the time to win over the ladies that Charlie had so lovingly looked after.

Now we have three distinct chicken apartments: the bachelor pad, with four beauties squabbling all day; the sad retirement home for a falsely brave but cowed Charlie; and the luxury condominium for the newly crowned Claude and his ladies.

This situation has become stabilised and, even though we all keep mentioning that we must do something about those damned roosters, not only can I not kill them, but my son and his partner can't take a life either. It just goes to show, if you take on the task of being on a farm, however small, you must harden your heart and take steps to learn to be a killer. I'm definitely still working on it, but I don't know if my life will be long enough for the lesson to be learnt or even if I want to learn it. 🌿



Organic Dairy

by Wendy Klein, Pine Lodge, Vic.

We are proud to be certified organic dairy farmers. It is nice to know that *Grass Roots* readers will approve of us! When we tell people we are certified organic farmers, the reaction is never neutral, it's either accolades or mutterings of stupidity – 'it won't work for long' – and a look for our extra heads!

After their initial shock of actually talking to a 'certified' farmer, people ask the usual four questions: You don't use super? You don't spray your drains? You can't spray the weeds? What do you do for mastitis?

IT'S NOT SO HARD

Superphosphate supplies phosphorus to the soil, but most of it is locked up and unavailable to plants. Organic farmers work on balancing their soil minerals, building humus levels, aerating and improving the biological activity in their soils, which helps release the locked-up phosphorus. Other forms of organics-approved phosphate fertilisers are rock phosphate, reactive phosphate rock, guano (high in calcium also), as well as some quarry dusts.

Drains can be burnt off, flame or steam weeded, or mechanically hoed. While these may not be quite as thorough or as easy as spraying with toxic chemicals, it's far better for our health and the environment!

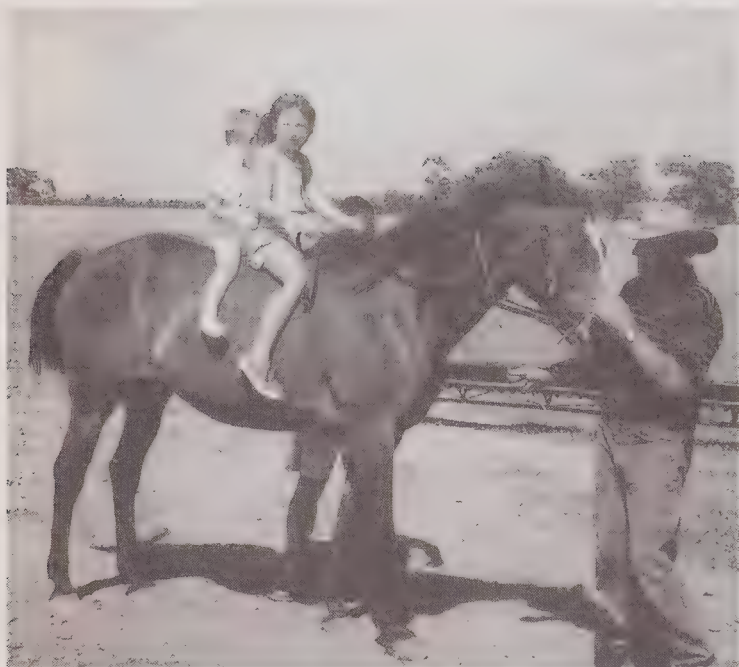
Weeds indicate something is lacking or out of balance in the soil. The organic farmer will endeavour to correct the problem – often sour, compacted, low calcium soil – and use the weeds for green manure, before they seed, instead of spraying with chemicals and killing beneficial soil fauna.

Mastitis and all other common complaints are best prevented. Most organic farmers are proactive, rather than reactive. Everything comes from the soil up, so organic farmers have to work on the health and balance of the soil. The 'tools' of drugs and chemicals are not available to us. If a cow does get mastitis, there are various vitamins, minerals, herbs and homoeopathics we

can use; only rarely are we unable to fix the problem.

Since changing to organic farming years ago, we have acquired an army of workers in the form of dung beetles. These burrowing beetles take the dung down deep and return 80 percent of the nitrogen from cow pats to the soil, rather than it going into the atmosphere. While working, they are also aerating the soil and opening it up for better water penetration, absorption and holding capacity. They also reduce fly problems by removing their breeding grounds. We didn't buy these workers, they just arrived when conditions were right for them.





ORGANIC PRACTICES

We work under strict standards, set by a committee of representatives of the various certifying bodies and AQIS (Australian Quarantine Inspection Service). These standards also comply with overseas countries' standards, as the product may be exported. We are audited annually, with records, milk quality, animals, dairy hygiene and soil all checked. Either a product or soil sample is taken for chemical residue testing at an approved laboratory. Random audits are also conducted. We are (milk) Quality Assured with an annual audit and Livestock Producer Assured, which involves random audits.

All feed must be certified organically grown, or produced on our property.

As certified organic farmers, we are required to have five percent of our farm as either grasslands or treed areas.

Organic farmers are great recyclers! We recycle or compost the calf and feed pad bedding, cow manure, slurry (wash-down from the dairy and yard), eggshells, chicken manure and feathers, plain cardboard, and anything else that was once living and will decompose.

Our horse is living testimony to organic farming. She has a placid temperament, good muscle tone, a good coloured shiny coat and still has all her teeth in good condition. She's 30 years old and we've never treated her for any ailment.

Most people realise (or at least suspect) that the chemicals in our food

and the air are a major cause of cancer, but still look for an excuse when they 'have' to use them in their farming, gardening or household practices. Producing, buying and consuming organic produce is not only better for us and the environment, it tastes far better! Chemicals make food bitter. The best way to appreciate the difference between conventional and organic food is to compare a shop-bought tomato with a home-grown one. Similarly, the difference between conventional and organic butter is just as obvious.

When you next reach for some delicious organic dairy products, think of the effort made by the certified organic dairy farmers! ☘

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Gromark Sheep

by Megg Miller, Nagambie, Vic.

If you enjoy spinning or knitting up spun wool, you will be interested in Gromarks. They're an easy-care sheep developed 30 years ago specifically for Aussie conditions. Although an excellent prime lamb breed, their fleece is soft-handling and easy to spin and takes dye beautifully.

Carole and Ken Wylie run a flock of 300 Gromarks on their farm 10 kilometres south of Orange. 'The Gromark was suggested to me by a machine-knitting friend who had seen them at a handcrafts display. I saw photos and liked their general appearance and was impressed that they suffered few fly-strike problems, had excellent feet for wetter climates like ours, and were great mothers, raising twins and triplets with no problems. The fleece was a lovely length too, 140 centimetres and great for hand-spinning.'

The Wylies originally lived in a rural area near Sydney where Carole bred and exhibited Shetland sheep dogs. They kept a couple of horses and a cow that was put into calf each year, but had no other farming experience. Then coloured fleece caught Carole's eye and they travelled extensively to collect different breeds of coloured sheep. When they relocated to Orange 15 years ago the coloured flock accompanied them. As these sheep aged the couple looked around for a breed that grew well and so brought better prices

in the meat markets.

The Wylies' 138-acre farm near Orange has rich volcanic soil that supports black Sallies, viminalis gums and one of the last stands of agregatta gums in the district. The local nursery, recognising this important resource, collects seed each year. Carole and Ken also lease 100 acres across the road, mainly for cattle. Before drought times they ran 45 breeders, which were Angus/Limousin and put back to an Angus bull. Although animal husbandry skills were limited when they first moved to the farm, Ken, with assistance from the local vet, soon learnt to handle difficult calving. 'This skill is rarely needed with the Gromarks because of the easy lambing', said Carole.

BREEDING GOALS

With Carole's strong interest in fibre she has had to look at the Gromark and work out how she can breed prime lamb that's competitive in today's tough market, yet maintain or improve on fleece properties too. 'For us personally we have decided to reintroduce some of the breeds that figured in the Gromark's background. I have used English Leicester (which contributed to the make-up of Borders) and this year have purchased a good Corriedale ram from the Western District of Victoria. Hopefully this will standardise the wool and as I already have a



small market for fleece and commercially spun wool it will help keep the same handling properties in my wool that were present before we began trying to strengthen the meat side', said Carole. 'We're looking for a bright white wool with a lustrous sheen and a micron of between 27 and 30. At present we cut about four to five kilograms off ewes and though the rams vary have had one that cut 8.4 kilograms, which is fantastic.'

WORKING SMART

Taking on the challenge of farm life hasn't worried Carole or Ken although neither are spring chicks. They realised they would need to do many of the jobs themselves and Carole undertook and passed a professional wool classing course when she was 60. This has proved invaluable as they do the wool clip themselves, and the knowledge has assisted Carole when selecting wool for her machine-knitting. Both Carole and Ken feel they made the right choice of breed with the Gromark as the sheep are easy to handle, even with weights of around 80 kilograms and 110 kilograms.

To cut down work and worry at lambing time, the pregnant ewes are given lupins for extra protein a few weeks before they're due to drop. This not only puts them in optimum condition at lambing, but reduces the incidence of pregnancy toxemia.



Carole makes and sells spectacular knitted items from Gromark fleece.

Olsen's licks are available to the ewes at all times.

In the past foxes have been controlled through baiting, but the Wylies worry about the risk to their dogs so have taken a different approach by bringing in an alpaca wether as a live-stock guardian.

MARKETING

'We wean lambs at three to four months, depending on the season. They are sorted for potential breeding stock and the remainder are grown out to 50 kilograms or just below for the meat market at 8 to 10 months. Even rams run on for stud purposes, but which haven't made the grade, make good prices in the meat market', said Carole.

'We keep a few rams for sale and also ewes that are usually breeding stock that have lower estimated breeding values than what we want to keep. Our sheep are vendor declared foot rot free, rams are accredited brucellosis tested and the flock is into our fourth year as MN-111 (OJD status).

'Although I'm able to use our wool in the knitted longline jackets, we do sell five ply (it knits up like eight ply) machine wool on cones or in 500-gram hanks. Our customers love it because it's soft-handling; some dye it, and I can vouch for how beautifully it takes dye because the jackets I knit use dyed wool and look fabulous.' ❀

PHONE CORRECTION

In the article on Plymouth Rock last issue we gave the wrong contact number. It should read 08-8836-7242. We apologise for any inconvenience. ❀



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Gromark Breed Profile

The Gromark breed was initiated by Arthur Godlee in Tamworth 30 years ago. He worked for the agriculture department and saw a need for an easy-care fast-growing sheep that put on muscle rather than fat when taken on to heavier weights. He used Border Leicester rams from multiple births over Corriedale ewes and put selection pressure on fertility, growth rate and fleece quality. Once these traits were well established he started scanning for eye muscle and fat levels and culled any rams that had too much fat.

The Gromark Society of Australia was established in 1979 and the first flock book published in 1981. There were 28 studs registered, a figure that has dropped markedly in recent years. The society passed the rule when inaugurated that showing Gromarks was prohibited, but displaying sheep with their production records at appropriate venues was acceptable and even beneficial for the society.

DESCRIPTION

Gromarks are polled, large-framed and plain-bodied and have dark hooves and muzzle. The plain body reduces vulnerability to flystrike while dark hooves mean low susceptibility to foot rot.

Temperament

Although vigorous active sheep Gromarks are easy to handle. Ewes are conscientious protective mothers.

Environment

Gromark are adaptable, flourishing in good country, but resilient when conditions are adverse because of their hardiness and efficient feed utilisation.

Fibre Character

Wool is stylish, white, generally around 27 – 33 micron and 130 – 140 millimetres length in staple. It is used in knitwear, furnishings, and as a filler for carpet blends, but also has



appeal to hand-spinners and knitters.

Carcass Production

Growth rates and leanness are priorities for breeders. Under good conditions weaning weights of 45 kilograms and yearling weights of 70 kilograms can be anticipated. The lamb carcass is longer than traditional prime lamb types with a slightly flatter leg.

Breeding

Fertility is high, mothering ability is excellent, even in first cross-ewes, and lambing problems minimal. Twins and triplets are well nurtured, even during drought.

Special Features

The Gromark is a hardy dual-purpose breed and, while meat production is the priority, fibre characteristics can be maximised for niche markets. For the small-scale sheep keeper the Gromark is an ideal self-replacing prime lamb breed.

More Information

Want to know more about Gromarks? Carole and Ken are busy folk, but happy to talk about keeping Gromarks or the features of the spun wool and how best to use it. They can be contacted by phone/fax on 02-6365-4341 or email: kenandcarole@keyoptions.com.au ❀

Safe Tethering

by Amos Laird, Bullsbrook, WA.



How to safely tether animals of all types has long puzzled people on the land. Aussie inventor and long-time GR reader Amos Laird believes he has solved the problem.

I first noticed the need for a solution to the age-old problem of small animal tethering when I was 17. At the time (1983) I was studying at agricultural college and one day had to rescue a dog that had managed to hang itself over the fence it was tethered to. It had jumped over the fence, but its leash did not afford the poor thing enough free length to reach the ground on the other side. I unclipped it and, after being a bit wobbly on its legs for a short time, it fortunately made a full recovery. I remember thinking at the time that there had to be a better way than tying the poor dog to a fence or whatever was close at hand. In hindsight, I can pretty safely say that this was when the seed for my invention the Tethermax was sown.

INVENTIVE BACKGROUND

The men in my family have set a tradition of being inventors and have greatly influenced me in my own endeavours. My late father Allan Raymond Laird was an exceptionally creative and talented interior designer. His natural flare for creativity, however, extended far beyond the boundaries of his chosen profession. Dad was a true innovator and inventor. These attributes were undoubtedly gained during his formative years as a farmer's son in the remote Western Australian eastern wheat-belt town of Naremben. If you needed something, you designed and built it yourself. Money was tight, and in any case it was a long haul to go anywhere to buy something even if you could afford it.

Dad learnt from the master himself. My late grandfather Allan John Laird

was a hard, God-fearing, lateral-thinking master of innovation. His two main hobbies were reading the Bible and overhauling intricate wristwatches, while wearing a monocle and using little more than a few basic tools under the light of an old Tilley lantern.

In the late 1930s, while working as a maintenance man for Sanitarium Health Foods in Bickley Valley, WA, my grandfather made a very interesting observation. He noticed that some scattered wheat grains, which were on the floor under a steam dump-valve, sort of 'exploded' when a gush of steam hit them. This got the gears of his mind turning and before too long he approached his superiors and informed them that he believed he could create a viable new type of breakfast cereal. They agreed to the construction of a prototype and allotted a very modest sum of money for AJ (as he was affectionately known) to construct what he had in mind.

To keep in line with his budget, he scrounged second-hand materials from local scrap steel merchants and then carted it all back up the Darling Ranges to Sanitarium's factory where he built his prototype 'steam column'. At the time, my great uncle Colin Lockyer was working as a Wheat-Bix packer. He can still clearly remember AJ shouting out loudly above the noise of the factory: 'I've got it, I've got it!' The steam column worked a trick and 'puffed wheat' soon became a household name.

Later in his Naremben farming years, AJ inadvertently developed a reputation for being 'the bloke who can fix anything'. Friends, local farmers and

even people from outside the district would bring their (mostly mechanical) problems to him and he'd fix the supposedly unfixable, or design and build an appropriate solution from whatever resources were lying around the place.

At the time the 240-volt power grid had not yet made it out into a lot of rural areas and so a diesel, petrol or kerosene power plant was the norm on farms like AJ's. To keep the noise down it was commonplace for the generator shed to be located some distance from the homestead. Arguably the least likable aspect of this was at night when the last person up had to fire up a Tilley lantern and begrudgingly trudge outside to shut the generator down (particularly undesirable through the depths of winter). Not being one to be so easily inconvenienced by such impracticalities, AJ sought to discover a solution. Having studied electrical engineering as a younger man (not quite graduating due to chronic tuberculosis), the answer was found to lie in the very electricity itself. He theorised that if he could make an electrical switch automatically determine 'load', he could solve the problem. Hence, the load-sensing electrical switch was born. With the switch fitted, all you now had to do was to simply switch off the last power-drawing household appliance (the bedside lamp) and the generator would shut down automatically.

Of course, these days everything from an electric kettle to a Commodore has one or a plurality of load-sensing switches incorporated into their function and design. All this was made possible by the late night, lamp-lit mumblings and humble origins of a



wheat-belt tinkerer!

At the risk of seeming a little long-winded, I felt it necessary to give this background that might help explain how a bloke like me became an inventor. I think that, like myself, most inventors are a result of the personal and physical environments in which they were raised.

TETHERED TO INVENTION

Fast forward to 1987. Due to ridiculously low pay rates in the agricultural employment sector, I obtained a job in the mining industry. It was during this time that I was fortunate enough to secure and complete a mature-age apprenticeship as a mechanical fitter, specialising in gold-extraction equipment. Here I obtained the necessary skills to build what was in my mind. Speed and improvisation were essential elements of the job description.

I left after five and a half years to travel around this great country of ours in a little, old motorhome for about 12 months. As well as allowing me time to relax and see new sights, what I unexpectedly discovered was that after several years of working flat to the boards in a high-pressure production environment I now had time to think.

The issue of small animal tethering was one of the matters that I was now able to concentrate some attention on. I realised that the main problem was how to get a stake safely and easily both into and back out of the ground. Belting a steel picket into the ground with the back of an axe and then straining your back to pull the picket out again to relocate it is not only primitive but dangerous. I figured that, with this problem solved, the rest would be a

process of determining how to reduce the risk of the animal tangling.

The answer lay in something I'd learnt in technical college during my apprenticeship: the sliding mass principle. I figured that if a sliding bead-breaker could deliver enough force to separate the stubborn bead of a tyre from a rim, it could also drive a stake into the ground. Removal of the stake would then be easy because the handle is physically connected to the stake and only has to be slid upward to hammer the stake back out of the ground. I named this simple principle 'impact and reverse impact'.

Preventing Tangling

I learnt that in the realm of dog tethering there are many claims made about tangle-proof designs. I soon discovered they were all rubbish. Simple physics dictates that for as long as you have a dog restrained by a leash the animal is *always* at risk of entanglement. For example, a dog needs only to roll over its tether line and then get up for the line to become wrapped around its torso or legs.

I decided that, solely through engineering, all that can be done is to design a product so that the risk of tangling is reduced to the lowest degree of likelihood. This was achieved through the design of what I called my 'double anti-tangle system'. After five years of use I am yet to see or hear of an animal being tangled while on the device. You can also accurately set the chain's radius for up to four metres so that your organic lawnmower's nose is just centimetres from your prize veggie patch.

Water Supply

The next issue to be addressed was that of water for the tethered animal. I have witnessed dogs that knock their water over out of pure spite towards their owners, just for having tied them up in the first place. The common practice of placing the water source at the outer periphery of the animal's reach 'so it can only get its nose in' might work, until the animal winds its tether line around the tree or post once or twice, then it's the start of the end for the poor thing.

I reasoned that the only way to prevent this was to attach the bowl to a secure anchor point. Thus, centrally

mounting the bowl over the handle section of the stake part of the device was found to be totally effective in solving the age-old problem of how to stop the animal from spilling its water. A couple of added bonuses included easy adjustment of the bowl height and the fact that, if a tangle did occur, the animal could only get closer to its water source rather than further away.

Cool Shade

The issue of shade is currently being addressed through the development of an appropriate shade provision. This will also be attached to the device so that you can use the Tethermax in any location devoid of trees or other sources of shade. This and other accessories, including a dry feed bowl, will be brought to the market just as soon as we can make enough sales to raise the development capital required. The development of both small and medium sized Tethermaxes will also soon commence, so that every size of dog, sheep, goat and even cat can be tethered in safety as well.

WHERE TO BUY

I am very pleased to announce to GR readers that we have just completed the final preproduction hurdles and the Tethermax is now available for sale.

A large size Tethermax will retail for \$189.95 including tax, plus postage and handling. It is solidly constructed from high quality materials and will offer years of service in helping people to more effectively handle and manage their pets or working animals. An operator's manual and a full 12-month warranty will be supplied with every Tethermax sold.

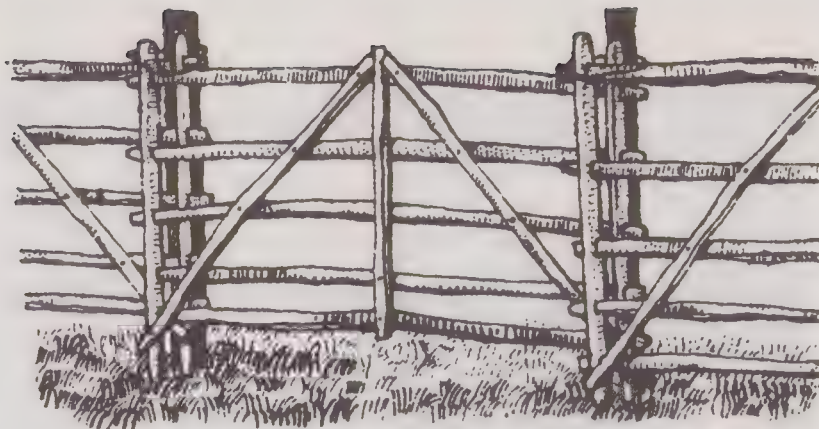
Initially, we will be retailing these ourselves so people can deal direct with the manufacturer and we can offer customer support in terms of spare parts, product knowledge and advice.

In closing, one question that I am quite often asked is: Do you have other inventions in the pipeline? My answer to that is: Yes, but you'll have to wait to see what they are.

All enquiries about the Tethermax can be directed to: Amos Laird, PO Box 41, Muchea, WA 6501. Ph: 08-9571-3909. Email: amos@tethermax.com 🐾

On The Fate Of A Gate

by David Richardson, Scarsdale, Vic.



What follows is a buyer beware story set in Victoria where properties can in some cases only be accessed by 'carriageway easements'. These are not roads as such, but portions of land that traverse private property to permit access to other properties where no other access is available.

There is usually no problem and people go about their business unimpeded. However, in a case where the easement can only be reached by traversing private property, the property owner can deny access by the simple expedient of erecting a gate, complete with chain and padlock, across part of their property. Keys to the lock do not have to be given out to those affected.

Apart from hindering other landowners, gates with locks can impede emergency vehicles and deter deliveries of materials, visitors and service providers. Not everyone has a set of bolt cutters in the boot of their car, should the need arise. Further, while the owners of the property might be willing to let people through, that is, unlock the gate, they might not always be home to do so.

How does this potentially unpleasant situation come about? Simply through councils not ensuring that roads were provided at the time of the original subdivision submission, or, as in the above case, the incorrect placement of a road in relation to easements and private property, which meant that there was intervening private property between road and easement. This also brings into question such issues as who is responsible for maintenance and public liability insurance.

The question arises of why anyone would deny access. Several answers come to mind: because they can, the

desire to control, or out of sheer bloody-mindedness. If I were paranoid and believed in conspiracies, perhaps it could also be a plot to force those affected to sell out, the idea being that becoming tired of having to open and close the gate they would put their property on the market. Access issues can render a property potentially unsaleable. Even if the original owner is granted access via a key to the padlock, at the largesse of the easement owner, there is no automatic transference to a new owner. Padlocks can be changed at will.

WHAT TO DO IN A LOCK-OUT

If the gate and lock people are intransigent, council should be appraised of the situation, the aim being that they will resume land sufficient to provide unimpeded public access. Usually, the land in question will be valued and an offer of compensation made and, if accepted, the land reverts to council and titles are amended accordingly. Council also gets to maintain the new road and give it a name. If the offer is rejected, compulsory acquisition may result. This will depend on how quickly council wants to resolve the issue.

If emergency services could be affected, contact them, tell them of the situation and suggest they make their own representations. The more pressure brought to bear the more likely you will get an acceptable result.

Another potentially unpleasant issue of dispute is that of fence location. It is advisable when purchasing a property to have it surveyed to ensure the correct position of boundaries. If a fence is found to be in the incorrect location, it is in the interest of the new owner and those bordering to have it

relocated. This could mean the erection of a new fence. Regulations pertaining to fences, including cost liability, are available via state government websites; councils will also provide information.

All I will mention in connection to fences is the matter of the Law of Adverse Possession. This is explained in fencing regulations. In short, it is because of this law that it is in the owner's best interests to have fences correctly aligned. I know of one dispute over a fence where the police were called. The constable who attended was not amused and considered it a waste of police time. Interestingly enough, a new fence was very quickly erected in accordance with a survey that had been previously made for one of the disputing parties.

The above is based on factual events that I have been witness to. It might be an isolated case, I don't know, but, as one person said to me after having to drive around the locked gate because the owners of the padlock were not home: 'This sort of thing doesn't belong out here'. ♣

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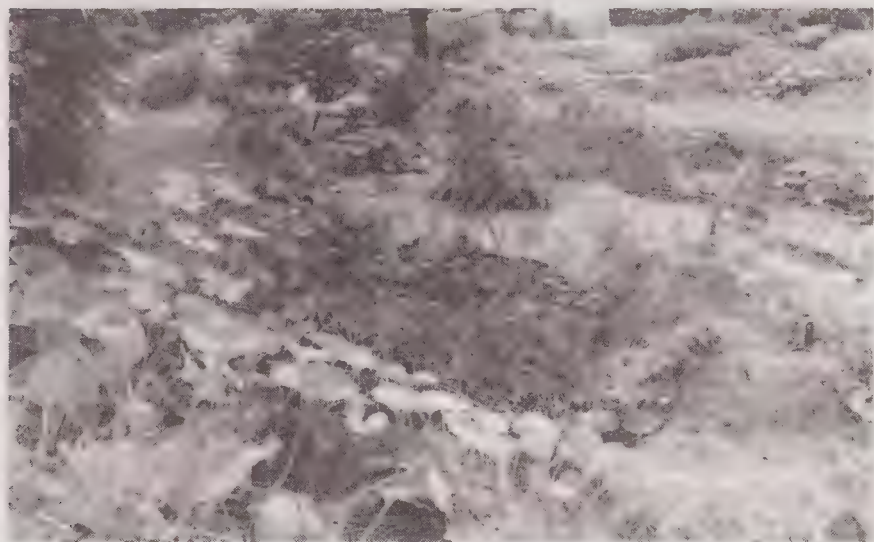
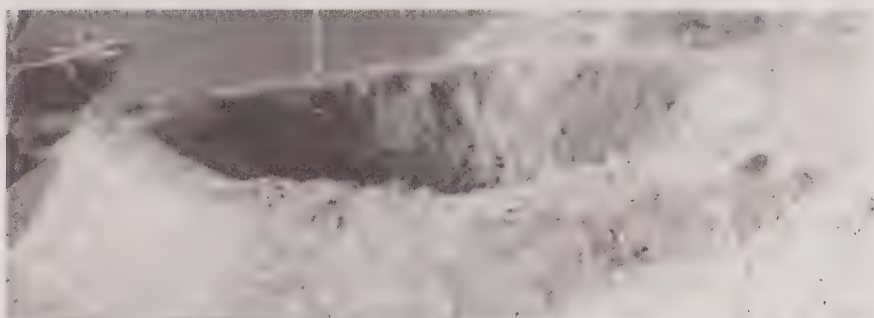
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Build A Mulch Pit Garden

by Dorothy Creevey, Old Bonalbo, NSW.



Turn a problem drainage site into a productive one: dig out a large pit, mulch the banks, fill the hole with organic material and then you can start planting your mulch pit garden.

Do you have a runoff or wet area, or a greywater problem in the garden? Do you want to reduce your impact on the environment by taking some responsibility for your own bulky prunings and garden waste disposal?

In permaculture we are taught 'the problem is the solution', so to correct these problems we need to harvest and use the water rather than pass the problem on to someone else by draining the site. The obvious choice is to use plants. Many plants such as bananas, pawpaws, tamarillos and palms love lots of water and nutrients, but don't like to have their feet wet, so we could build a mulch pit for them. An added bonus is that these plants prefer to live in a circle.

The plants are positioned on the rim of the pit, but their roots are able to seek the moisture and nutrients derived from the mulch, manure and water deposited in the pit.

To increase the moisture in the pit, as well as make maximum use of the site, an outdoor shower could be installed by putting a slatted platform over the pit. The plants, when grown, will offer some privacy. It might even be a suitable place to build a duck coop with a slatted floor. Let your imagination run wild!

MAKING THE PIT

- Although the pit can be any size you like, I suggest marking a circle two to three metres across and digging the pit about 0.5 to 1.5 metres deep from base to rim. Pile the soil in a mound around the hole to build a surrounding bank. If the site is on a slope, make the pit a crescent shape to catch runoff water.

- When deep enough, level the top off to a width of about 0.75 metres.

- Sprinkle all over with ash, lime or dolomite if soil is acid.

- Cover the planting areas with compost or aged manure.

- Lay wet newspaper, cardboard or other organic sheet material over the

bank and sides.

- Mulch the planting area and the sides.

FILLING THE PIT

Fill the pit with mulch materials such as banana leaves, coarse twigs, garden prunings, hay, rice husks, sawdust and kitchen scraps. The pit doesn't have to be filled immediately, but there will be less chance of erosion if it is at least covered. It can be gradually filled by continually adding material in layers of 15 – 20 centimetres, preferably layers of fine, coarse and green materials. It is okay to overfill the circle so that it bulges up at the top as it will soon sink down. The mulch should soak up the water that collects in the pit.

The pit may fill with water in the initial stages if the soil is heavy clay, but unless it is very compacted earthworms will eventually be attracted to the organic matter and their tunnelling will allow the water to permeate the soil.

If stones are available, bank them to the outside of the rim to help retain the bank and improve the microclimate by storing heat.

PLANTING THE PIT

- Cut holes in the weed barrier to plant the rim with three or four short-lived legume nurse shrubs such as pigeon peas to provide nitrogen and frost and wind protection for other plants. Their prunings will also yield future nutritious mulch.

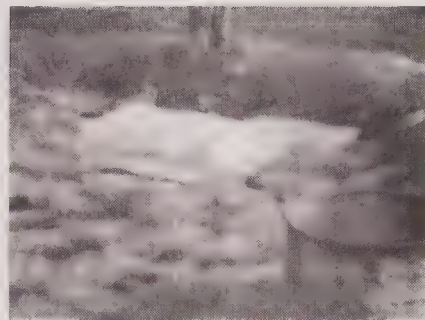
- Yams, taro, ginger or any other plant that can cope with possible wet feet can be planted inside the rim. If you dispose of scraps in the pit, volunteer plants like pumpkins and tomatoes are likely to spring up also.

- Plant comfrey around the outside base to retain the bank and catch and use excess nutrients. The comfrey can later be harvested to provide a rich mulch or liquid manure.

- Sprinkle seeds of ground-covering legumes, such as clover, vetch or lucerne, and self-seeding companion plants over any exposed soil or in soil pockets.

- When the nurse shrubs have established, plant pawpaws, palms or banana suckers between them.

- Plant sweet potato runners as ground cover.



- When nurse shrubs are mature, climbing beans or peas could be planted to snake up the trunks and, being legumes, also add nitrogen.

- When the bananas start to multiply cut out all but a grandmother, mother and daughter for each clump.

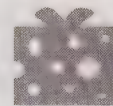
A JOY TO BEHOLD

Upon maturity the area is no longer an ugly hole in the ground, but a self-sustaining garden producing bananas, pawpaws, sweet potatoes, pigeon peas, green beans and taro as well as soaking up and recycling waste nutrients and water on site. All this in only a few square metres! ♻️

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WHAT'S ON

NSW ECO HOME TOUR

Manning River's inspirational Non-Conventional Homes Eco Tour will run on 11, 12 and 13 June. This self-drive tour includes food, art and demonstrations as well as owner builders and their homes. For full details contact Manning River Steiner School, 02-6551-3403.

SHEEP SHOW

Interested in sheep? Wool? Spinning? This year, the Australian Sheep and Wool Show will be held on 15 – 17 July, at the showgrounds, Bendigo, Victoria. Address general or sheep enquiries to Andrew Ternouth, 03-5439-5094. Woolcraft enquiries should go to Marie Grylls, ph: 03-5443-8965. The website is www.sheepshow.com

WA FARMERS' MARKET

Every Saturday year round Albany has a farmers' market at Aberdeen St, from 9am. Ph: 08-9841-4312 or email: farmersmarketalby@bigpond.com

DOG DAYS

Held annually over the Queen's Birthday weekend, 11 – 12 June, the Australian Kelpie Muster, Casterton Kelpie Festival and Casterton Working Dog Auction are a celebration of the birthplace of the Kelpie and a light-

hearted look at the Kelpie's vital role in rural life in Australia. Call the Casterton Visitor Information Centre on 03-5582-0270. Woof!

FREE GARDEN SEMINARS

The Kimbriki Eco Garden demonstrates ways to apply organic principles to everyday gardening, including composting, worm farming, mulching and low-waste organic gardening. It holds free seminars regularly, such as Intro to Eco Gardening on 16 June, and No Dig Garden on 30 June, both 10.30 – 1.00. Bookings are essential. Contact Penelope, ph: 02-9486-3512. Kimbriki Recycling and Waste Disposal Centre, Kimbriki Road, Terrey Hills (off Mona Vale Road), NSW.

MUDGEES FARMS WEEKEND

This year, the Mudgee Small Farm Field Days are on 15 – 16 July. Gates open at 8.30am and close at 5.00pm. A full program of the events, demonstrations and free seminars will be available in *The Land* on 7 July.

QUILTING GALORE

Congratulations to the Lismore Craft and Quilters Inc – their 25th Anniversary Exhibition is on 28 – 30 July at Lismore Workers Club, Keen Street, Lismore, NSW. Contact Elaine Weaver, ph: 02-6686-2370.

Kenniff Country Quilters' Annual Quilt Show is on at Mitchell Library Gallery, Mitchell, Qld, on 6 June – 17 July. Call Pat Small, ph: 07-4623-1614.

The Sydney Quilt Show is on 22 to

26 June, at the Exhibition Centre, Darling Harbour. Contact the Quilters' Guild of NSW Inc, ph: 02-9283-3737 or www.quiltersguildnsw.com

From 14 – 17 July, the Territory Quilts 2005 Exhibition will be running at Darwin Entertainment Centre. Write to Darwin Patchworkers and Quilters Inc, PO Box 36945, Winnellie, 0822, or go to www.darpatchquilt.com.au

NZ AG DAY

NZ readers might like to drop in to Fieldays, on 15 – 18 June at Mystery Creek, near Hamilton, to brush up on the latest agri businesses and services. Look up www.fieldays.co.nz or call +64-07-823-3456.

TREE DAY

Dig this: Trees help to filter water, combat salinity, clean the air and provide food and shelter to Australia's wildlife. National Tree Day, Australia's biggest community tree-planting event, is on Sunday 31 July, while Schools Tree Day is on Friday 29 July. To find a local site, call the Tree Day Hotline on 1300-885-000.

MMM... CHOCOLATE

If chocky is your weakness, pop in to the Aztec Chocolate Festival on 10 July. There'll be plenty of food, wine, music, kids' activities, cooking demonstrations and, you guessed it, chocolate. Go to The House of Anvers, 9025 Bass Highway, Latrobe, near Devonport, Tasmania. Ph: 03-6426-2958, email: anvers@bigpond.com.au

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Poultry Breeders

We're looking for purebred breeders to list in our next edition of the Poultry Breeders Directory.



Send a stamped SAE for a form to: PBD, PO Box 117, Seymour 3661.

ROUND THE MARKET PLACE

We hope you enjoy this feature introducing new products relevant to readers' lifestyles and interests.

COMPACT COMPOSTING LOO

Conventional composting toilets need a large under-floor space for installation of the unit. Now there is a more compact model available that sits on the floor. It has a glossy fibreglass casing, which makes it fit unobtrusively into modern homes. Called the Sun-Mar Excel, this composting loo has a three-chamber processing system with a rotating drum that ensures proper aeration, thorough mixing and even moisture distribution. A heater enhances the composting process and an electrically powered ventilation system prevents odours. The Sun-Mar is designed for a two to three bedroom home of up to

four permanent residents and is approved for use in all states except SA. The unit measures 79 centimetres high and 57 centimetres wide and costs about \$2300. There is a model suitable for solar powered applications that will service two to three full-time residents; the cost of this one is about \$2000.

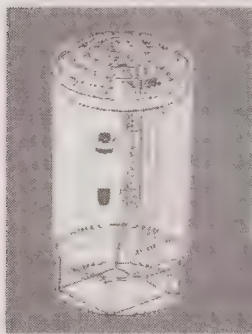
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AQUAMISER™ MOISTURE SENSOR

There's a growing trend to the installation of automatic watering systems, which are particularly useful when gardeners or orchardists need to be away from home often or for lengthy periods. The disadvantage, however, is that the watering system is likely to still operate when it has already rained or if mild weather conditions make watering unnecessary. The Aquamiser™ is one of the more sophisticated moisture sensors available. The device is filled with water during the normal watering cycle and when this has evaporated down to a preset level the controller allows the next watering to take place, during which the unit is automatically refilled. If it has rained, the next watering is delayed according to how much rain has fallen. Long-term water savings of up to 40 percent have been recorded. Cost of the unit is \$199 and installation can be done by any competent handyperson.

For more details contact Brunson Pumps, 280 Settlement Rd, Thomastown 3074. Ph: 03-9464-1033.



aquamiser™

LIQUID GYPSUM

Gyp-Flo is an alternative to powdered gypsum, used for improving the friability of clay soils. This liquid suspension can be applied through irrigation systems and sprayers or by a watering can. The average particle size of five micrometers allows the liquid to react quickly with the soil, unlike the traditional powder, which can take up to a year to be effective. No residue is left on the soil and the product can be used on existing gardens or bare soil. The application rate is 1 litre per 100 square metres. Gyp-Flo contains no chlorides, so can be used without producing sodium chloride in situations where there is high-sodium water. Cost for one litre is \$18.95.

Contact Day Dawn Nursery, 50 Kokoda St, Fairfield Waters, Idalia 4811. Ph: 07-4778-2949.

ECOPAPER PENS AND PENCILS

It's incredible to think that, Australia-wide, about 700 tonnes of waste per year is generated by something as simple as discarded pens. With rigid outer tubes made from 100 percent recycled paper, this range of affordable pens is set to have far less environmental impact. The ball-point inserts are the only waste generated. There are several styles available, including a retractable pen with an outer casing made from corn starch. Also available are several styles of pencil made from recycled paper. Prices per hundred items are very reasonable, ranging from 22 cents each (plus GST and freight) for a HB pencil to \$1.50 each (plus GST and freight) for the corn starch pen. It's possible to have a promotional message printed as well, for a minimum quantity of 500 items.

For enquiries contact Ecopaper P/L, PO Box 46, Berry 2535. Ph: 02-4234-1212. Email: ecopaper@shoal.net.au



GREENPET

Anyone who thinks their dog, cat or horse deserves only the best all-natural diet and health treatment will be interested in the



Greenpet range of products. Included in the catalogue are foods; healthy treats; supplements; lotions; shampoos; herbal, Bach flower and homoeopathic remedies; and books. There's even a range of cleaning products and supplements for humans.

To find out more or to order a catalogue, contact Greenpet, 129 Redwood Rd, Doonan 4562. Ph: 07-5449-1453. Email: info@greenpet.com.au Website: www.greenpet.com.au

RECENT RELEASES

Titles described can be ordered through your nearest bookstore.

ORGANIC: MIRKO GRILLINI'S ITALY

Mirko Grillini

Grillini is a great character as well as a passionate chef. This recipe book, sponsored by the Biological Farmers of Australia, contains healthy, tasty Italian recipes, interspersed with profiles on Australian biodynamic producers, snippets on Italy and backgrounders on different types of produce. The book is littered with bright, colourful photos, and is the first in a series of cookbooks promoting fresh organic food. A list of biodynamic suppliers is included.

P/b, 78pp, Puntoitalia, PO Box 1936, Milton 4064.

Website: www.puntoitalia.com RRP: \$24.95.

HORSE SENSE

Peter Huntington, Jane Myers, Elizabeth Owens

This in-depth guide to horse care in Australian and NZ is written in an easy-to-read style that should appeal to novices as well as experienced owners. It covers all aspects of horse care and management, including new techniques for handling difficult horses, latest info on health, feeds and supplements, safe riding, treating illnesses and injuries and guidelines for transportation and welfare. Facilities for both large and small properties are discussed and it is fully illustrated.

P/b, 352pp, Landlinks Press, PO Box 1139, Collingwood 3066.

Ph: 03-9662-7500. RRP: \$69.95.

THE IBS LOW-STARCH DIET

Carol Sinclair

IBS, or irritable bowel syndrome, affects one in five people, causing a range of symptoms including backache, gut pain, bloating and joint pain. This book shows a link between IBS and the arthritic disease ankylosing spondylitis, and explains how safely removing starch from the diet will relieve symptoms. The author suffered from IBS for the majority of her life, until she began this diet 20 years ago. The book is doctor-approved and includes over 200 starch-free, gluten-free recipes and a useful guide to eating out.

P/b, 255pp, Ninox Publishing, 18 Carrara St, Benowa 4217.

Ph: 1800-835-040. RRP: \$34.95.

PLAYING WITH WATER: A STORY OF A GARDEN

Kate Llewellyn

This book is a hard one to pigeonhole; it's really a combination of memoir and nature study, yet also includes poetry, recipes, wry humour and some general meditation on life. The focus is on the author's developing garden and the book is arranged as diary entries throughout a year. Llewellyn concludes: 'Houses are like marriages, it is not always the first you wanted that you got . . . yet what you had your heart set on would not have worn so well, nor made you as happy.' RR appreciates any person who likes to garden in their pyjamas.

P/b, 424pp, HarperCollins, PO Box 321, Pymble 2073.

Ph: 02-9952-5000. RRP: \$29.95.



EASY GARDEN MOSAICS

Clare Matthews

Like some ideas for mosaics? They're all here: pots, planters, mirror frames, water features, in fact, with this book in hand, you can systematically mosaic every nonliving object in your garden, including the walls. If you just want to start small, however, there are lots of fun and easy projects to tackle and the book includes colour step-by-step photos. RR liked the different paths and stepping stones the best, although the slate spiral patio was stunning.

P/b, 128pp, Hamlyn, c/- Bookwise International, 174 Cormack Rd, Wingfield 5013. Ph: 08-8268-8222. RRP: \$24.95.

THE NATIONAL TRUST RESEARCH MANUAL

Celestina Sagazio

If you have ever wondered about the history of your house, farm or town, this is your book. It explains how to read maps and date land records as well as advising the best way to find out who lived in your home, when it was built, how it was used, and even how it might have been painted and decorated. Apparently, there are excellent records for most areas and an amazing amount can be revealed. The book has 56 illustrations and an index.

P/b, 192pp, Halstead Press, 300/3 Smail St, Broadway 2007.

Ph: 02-9211-3033. RRP: \$29.95.

BAKING SODA

Vicki Lansky

This little American book contains 'over 500 fabulous, fun and frugal uses you've probably never heard of'. Don't believe it? Well, chapters cover cooking, kitchen care, bathroom, laundry, home maintenance, hygiene, remedies, kids, pets, workshop, garden, crafts and hobbies, the great outdoors and, of course, play projects for kids. Did you know baking soda tenderises meat? And there's more . . .

P/b, 108pp, Book Peddlers, c/- Bookwise International, 174 Cormack Rd, Wingfield 5013. Ph: 08-8268-8222. RRP: \$15.95.



DOWN HOME ON THE FARM

by Megg Miller.

At the start of the year I vowed to make life simple. If there was to be any sort of New Year's resolution, it would be to ensure life was straightforward and satisfying. So why has chaos reigned for months? One evening when I was getting het up about it all I remembered adventure and how it made my adrenaline surge, and that in situations where there was a choice I invariably made a decision that promised adventure. Driving down half-made dirt roads and becoming lost are part of my stock in trade. Acknowledging this predilection for excitement cast a brighter light on topsy-turvy times. It wasn't chaos, it was encountering change, adventure and, at times, a big dose of the unexpected.

January wasn't over when I emptied the dam. The water was murky and low, but still useable, and one morning I forgot to turn off the pump. Fortunately, there was water in one of the 'standby' tanks and a phone call booked a tanker delivery to fill the other, but buying water doesn't sit well. No sooner was this sorted out than one of the pet sheep died. It's to be accepted when stock are as old as Flora, but I was saddened and Dora took it badly and was so distraught at being left alone I thought she might go to the sheep yard in the sky too. There was also the issue of dealing with a big sheep in hot weather. Naturally, Flora declined distant spots under shady trees for her last breath and chose a narrow-doored empty turkey shed instead. If I say 'the flies were appalling', that should sum the situation up.

When an unexpected deluge of rain fell a few weeks later no one could believe it. The nearby hills received so much that water flooded across the flat country and along almost forgotten watercourses and filled up the dam. How incredible is that! The water did unpleasant things too, like flushing out snakes, which Suni described last issue when the poor pussy cat got bitten. I have to confess to a small adventure at this wet time. After book club one

night, instead of staying safely in town I decided to drive home. I knew it was too soon for the road to be cut off by flood water, so thought it would be fine to travel and certainly much quicker and more direct than less hazardous alternatives. Halfway home I was stopped by a fallen tree completely blocking access. Damn! I had to reverse the long Toyota van for miles. Tiring of this, I decided I'd go backwards and forwards a few times and turn around. There was water along the roadsides and it was bucketing down heavily, the back wheels slipped and slid a bit and I was bogged. I tried everything short of putting the clothes I was wearing under the wheels for extra traction, but nope, the van was not going anywhere. The cold wait for assistance was far from relaxing, when all around in the tree canopy were water-laden branches groaning and creaking ominously.

All these – the dam and Flora and getting bogged – became insignificant when David collapsed and had a couple of cardiac arrests just after we finished the last GR. His partner Sylke and Suni spent an alarming night at the hospital while medical staff stabilised him after the emergency air trip and then operated and put in a stent to open up the blocked artery. Just a day or two before he'd single-handedly moved a large aviary of mine over to the town block

and unloaded crates and crates of bottles at his winery. We've always believed he was a tough cookie and he had seemed invincible, but you don't know what's going on inside. He was very lucky to survive. He's coming good and sometimes one of us will tease him and say 'Dave, don't you remember, you said we could have/do X, Y and Z when you were in coronary care? Have you forgotten?' There will need to be lifestyle changes made, but he's doing well and no doubt too much already.

The garden was the perfect place to retreat to and assimilate the shock and lucky outcome. Just a few days later an acquaintance suffered a similar heart problem but died. What is important and what isn't become clear at times like this and health and family stand apart as being top considerations. I needed to raise a sweat and work off the worry and angst, so I chipped the weeds from an area of ground equal to two-thirds of a tennis court, just a metre or two each night. I look at it now and enjoy a good laugh. Onion grass is coming through and it will soon take over. The task wasn't necessary, but genteel weeding or snipping topiary wouldn't have raised a sweat or rebalanced my upset spirit.

What I should have been doing was sowing spring bulbs I'd just bought, or transplanting some of the perennials in pots in the greenhouse. The bulbs



included a couple of scillas (or squill), which are not like daffodils or freesias in size, but closer to a small to medium lemon. Most impressive. Unsure of where to plant them I got out the bulb book to get some background information, but as it all sounded like hard work I left them on the kitchen table and went home to the farm.

A sister-in-law rang next day to say they were in the area and could they come and stay. To make it easier, I'd remain at the farm and they could take over the town cottage. 'You will come and have dinner tomorrow night?' Liz asked. 'We'll cook you dinner.'

It was a most unusual tasting risotto. Even so, I had two serves, though I noticed my brother-in-law ate sparingly and my nephew declined seconds. What could have made it so bitter? We discussed the ingredients and examined the vegie peelings in the sink, but the cause remained a mystery. Outside for a minute moving hoses, I idly thought about the garden and bulbs sprang to mind. I'd noticed the bulb book on the back bench, but where were the scillas? Aggh!! I surmised we'd eaten them by mistake. It was horrible, but funny too. We all grabbed our throats and a hasty call was made to the poisons centre. No, we were told, that variety was not associated with poisoning, at worst we could expect a little diarrhoea.

We all ended up very sick, vomiting until not even a whit of scilla remained in our systems. And the poisons centre was right about diarrhoea, but clearly no one has told its staff what it's like if you eat a bulb. I'd driven back to the farm after the initial bout, thinking the reaction was all over. The relatives became concerned by the continuous vomiting and sought help at the hospital. I couldn't have driven there even if I'd wanted to. We were a sad and sorry bunch when we met up again the following afternoon, but relieved to have survived such a frightening ordeal. I'm off risotto for a while and no doubt my house guests will be in two minds about it. The remaining bulbs – we only used one thank goodness – have been planted and are now healthy, growing plants. Everything in the kitchen has been clearly labelled, the onion basket and the potato box, and a



Megg's abundant pumpkin patch.

box temporarily stored in the kitchen full of seed potatoes is not only labelled but has 'do not eat' underneath. It was an easy mistake to make because in the rush of settling in, the bulbs were erroneously put in with the onions. No more bulbs in the house, I've decided, they can wait for me out on the back verandah.

All this raises the problem of where you store your harvest. My onions are home-grown, there are potatoes, now in buckets, the Jerusalem artichokes are ready for digging and any day the butternut pumpkins, all 30 plus of them, will have to be brought in. The verandah isn't suitable; it gets damp and produce left there is bound to get nibbled by either mice or possums. When the tomatoes were all ripening I was glad of my *Grass Roots* and the article on bottling and making purée. I don't think I'm up to Vic's or Maxine's standard yet, but I do have enough bottled tomatoes to get through the winter. I don't have a Fowlers Vacola set-up and just used jars of whole tomatoes boiled for 30 minutes in a saucepan. They were Fowlers jars, however, and I bought new stainless steel lids, while with the purée I recycled jam jars and all but one sealed perfectly. They look so good in the cupboard I'm fired up now to acquire more jars in readiness for next season.

Cool weather means it's time to get out the mushroom farm. I've acquired a different brand this time, hoping the wait will be shorter and the directions easier to follow. It's in the laundry in a dark corner and I've got to wait a few

more days for the compost to turn frosty and then the soil and spores can be added and watered. Whenever I have a soft mushroom when I buy them or get given field mushrooms the peelings and inedible ones go to the same spot in the garden, in the hope I can establish them there. If it rains again, and there is no sign of even dark clouds at the moment, mushrooms could spring up in the garden as well as in the laundry. I could end up having mushrooms coming out my ears!

The sun is shining, there are jobs to do, so I can't dally any longer. My bulb order from one of the local schools' fundraising efforts has arrived, and frankly, it might be wise to put them straight into the garden. At least there are no scillas to cause trouble. There are chook sheds that need cleaning and leaves to be raked up or scooped out of roof guttering. All this is immensely satisfying, but juggling two places isn't simple. When I fall into bed of a night I'm too exhausted to give a hoot! ♡

—PENPALS—

I am a 39-year-old male, currently nearing the end of a prison sentence in Sale, Victoria. I am seeking penpals, anywhere, any age. My hobbies are art, cooking and gardening. My aim is to pursue a country lifestyle, beginning later this year, where I can utilise my carpentry and gardening skills. Will answer all letters.

Barry Burton,

PO Box 80p, SALE 3850.

Hello! My name is Jarrah. I am a 10-year-old girl turning 11 on 22 June. I love music, reading, drawing, painting, writing, cooking, sports and dancing. I'd love a penpal between 10 and 15 years old please.

Jarrah (GR 169),

C/- PO Box 117, SEYMOUR 3661.

I'm a Russian lady, single, 45 years old, from Toronto, NSW. I'm interested in nature, environmental science, organic gardening and farming, natural health, body, soul and spirit matters, craft, swimming, bushwalking and travelling. I'd like penpals with similar interests and close to my age.

Irina (GR 169)

C/- PO Box 117, SEYMOUR 3661.

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NORTHERN RIVERS, 12 ac, solar powered cabin, composting toilet, water tanks, shed, c/port, gas HW, oven. Ten mins Nimbin, creeks. \$245,000. Ph: 02-6676-4665.

UPPER BELLINGER VALLEY, nature lover's retreat: Secluded 2 ha north-facing house site with 1/2 share of estab 420 ha multiple occupancy (MO) on mid north coast. Ninety percent of property boundary is rugged nat pk, which contains World Heritage-listed r/forest & declared wilderness areas. Featuring r/forest gullies, forested slopes, cleared crk flats & swimming holes, Bishops Creek certified organic MO is nestled along a perm wilderness-fed major tributary of beautiful Bellinger River. Diverse native wildlife incl many species listed as threatened & over 140 bird species – many spectacular or uncommon. Cosy basic timber 2 1/2 room cabin (kitchen/dining/lounge & b/r separated by screen-meshed breezeway) at this tranquil house site adj to forest in hidden valley. Fuel stove for HW/cooking/heating, solar HW, 12V solar power, composting toilet, outside shower, ph line, f/trees. Although completely private, the site is quite close to the main MO valley & community assets, incl meeting house, pump, tractor, trailer, f/trees. Bellinger a bit over half hr. \$160,000. Ph: 02-6655-1225.

MILLTHORPE – CENTRAL TABLELANDS, 3 b/r character home on 4.3 ac, mature garden, f/trees, vegie beds, chook house, garage/workshop, town/tank water, 20 mins from Orange. \$348,000. View: www.realestate.com.au no 102362590 or contact James Eddy, Raine & Home, 0419-627-651.

BEGA, NSW: 3 b/r mudbrick home & shed on 5 ac in bushland setting with council services & school bus. Shed contains office & lge workshop. Orchard, vegie garden, chook yard, tennis court & is 25 km nth of town. Ph: 02-6492-7239.

MID NORTH COAST, 100 ACRES SUBTROPICAL saleable hardwood timber. Desirable locale, organic rating, rich soil – 'grow babies'. Adjacent state forest. One km to Coorabakh Nat Pk, good walking trails, excel potential eco-tourism. \$420,000 ONO. Ph: 02-6556-7691.

BUNDANOON, SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS: 2 b/r cottage, l/up garage, polished floors, 9 ft ceilings, gas & wood heating, solar/gas HW, water tanks, new covered deck. Chook yards, permaculture fruit & vegie on 1/2 ac. All natives perimeter. Mature rhodies, camellias, magnolias, maples, azaleas close to rear house. \$325,000 ONO. Ph: 02-4883-6921 AH Mon - Thurs.

QUEENSLAND

LOCATION LOCATION LOCATION. Twenty mins to Tin Can Bay, gateway to World

Heritage-listed Fraser Island! Close to crks, lagoons & mins from Rainbow Beach, this low-maintenance 2 b/r cottage is ideally positioned to take advantage of the coastal lifestyle in a rural setting. Enjoy the breezes while watching the birds on the covered verandah. Take only a 5 min drive to enjoy an a la carte meal and icy cold drink at the renowned Silky Oak Tea Gardens. Close to school & shops, this beautiful half ac property is priced to sell at \$159,000. So be quick it won't last. Ph: 07-5486-5002.

DEEPWATER: AFFORDABLE, NATURAL independence. Open plan with lots of flexibility to accommodate your desires within this 180 m² home. Solar powered, 11,000 gal of r/water. Clever irrigation set-up with 4 dams, twin impeller pump & header dam providing on demand water for gardens & firefighting. Much of the property has never been burnt due to excel fire management strategies, thus lush areas of regeneration. Elevated & private set back 700 m from rd. Solar HW heating. Composting toilet, lovely lge outdoor verandah. Valuable plantation of teak trees under irrigation where timber will be of high value in 15 years. Ten mins to beaches, crks & nat pks. \$250,000. Ph: 07-4156-6556.

Website: www.organicodyssey.com.au

SEVEN KILOMETRES TO EUNGELLA & 75 km west of Mackay, 3/4 ac with shack, shed, power, water & septic. \$70,000. Full details ph: 0417-820-595.

GRASSIFIEDS

PROPERTY FOR SALE QUEENSLAND

CONVERTED CHURCH 1 hr west of Gympie, toilet, bathroom, solar HW, c/port, separate b/r & kitchen. \$78,000. Ph: 07-4091-6606.

CHILDERS: TIME TO SELL OUR PIECE OF PARADISE. Elevated idyllic location, rural views, approx 13 ac. Three b/rs, walk-in robes, study (4th b/r). Lounge, newly refurbished kitchen & bathroom, elec, ph, dble garage, shed, shadehouse, 20,000 gal r/water, dam, recently referenced, estab gardens. Ideal block for cattle, horses, orchard, vineyard. \$270,000. Ph: 07-4126-1904, mob: 0427-261-904.

DARLING DOWNS: 61 ac, 6 b/r log cabin Queenslander, solar power, mains power avail, ph, septic, s/c/stove with HWS, gas stove, gas fridges. Established organic nursery gardens, orchard, sml olive grove. School bus, mail. \$135,000 ONO. Ph: 07-4669-2118.

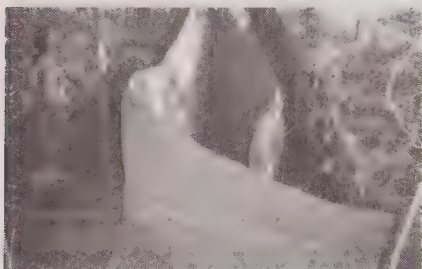
HERVEY BAY: GORGEOUS QUEENSLANDER, 10 mins from town, leafy & private 1 1/4 ac. Walk to great fishing & mudcrabs. \$259,000. Ph: 07-4125-8328.

Website: www.herveybayhideaway.com

GREENMOUNT, TWENTY MINUTES TOOWOOMBA: 3 b/r house, fertile 1/3 ac. \$155,000 or exchange Tasmania. Ph: 07-4697-1244.

LOWMEAD: CARE FOR A RARE RAINFOREST, 65.13 ha (163 ac) in quiet rural area 3 mins drive to friendly sml town with hotel, accom, primary school, PO & shop. Forty ac of old-growth r/forest with an abundance of flora & fauna. The biggest figs in the area. Two crks through property leading to the Baffle Creek which is close by. Massive 12 x 12 m sturdy liveable shed with full-length 6 m awning & entertainment area. Property is half-fenced. 10,000 gal r/water. The current owner would consider a partnership under a mutual conservation agreement for a 50% share for \$120,000. Ecotourism potential or quiet home in nature. \$220,000. Ph: 07-4156-6556.

Website: www.organicodyssey.com.au

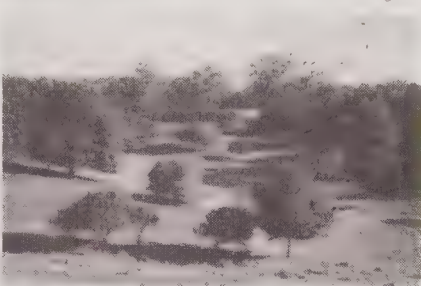


VICTORIA

BEMM RIVER AREA: Fully renovated 3 b/r house on 1 ac, l/up garage. \$210,000. Ph: 0427-983-652.

DEADLINES: GR 170 – 30 JUNE
GR 171 – 30 AUGUST

DUNACH VIA CLUNES: 2 hrs from Melbourne, 10 ac undulating, peaceful property. Many mature eucalypts, box & wattles, surrounded by bush. Two dams, comfortable 2 b/r, 6 sq Hardiplank house. Well-equipped kitchen with gas fridge/stove/HW & firebox heater. Steel shed/garage 5' x 3' m. Generator, wired for mains/solar. 18,000 lt tank water. \$158,000. Ph: 03-9397-7937.



WESTERN RED CEDAR COTTAGE situated on 20 ac at Cape Nelson on the outskirts of Portland, Vic. Featuring scenic views, just mins away from isolated beaches. Property incl bore, dam, barn or workshop & cleared paddocks for grazing. \$238,000. Ph: 03-5521-1009, mob: 0428-510-032.

PYRENEES REGION, MINUTES TO AVOCA, 5 b/r well-finished mudbrick house on the edge of a forest. Twelve ac & studio & wood kiln. Peaceful & natural, ample tank water, excel home. \$230,000+. Ph: 03-5331-1154.

EAST GIPPSLAND, WISELEIGH, near Bruthen, 20 km to Bairnsdale, 10 ac estab organic permaculture farm. Mains or solar power, 3 b/r brick renovated home, gas or combustion stoves, wetback or gas HWS, dishwasher, bungalow, sheds, reticulated water, orchard, dam & crk. Land for Wildlife. \$295,000. Call Sarah, 0427-240-095.

CHARMING LARGE FEDERATION STYLE home on 5 ac, Gippsland, Vic. Excellent shedding, inground pool, orchard & more. View at: www.noagentproperty.com.au (prop ID Hyland). Ph: 03-5174-6360, mob: 0408-584-944.

SOUTH GIPPSLAND NEAR WELSHPOOL, 45 ac, spectacular 180° views stretching from Cape Liptrap to Wilsons Promontory & 90 Mile Beach. Comfortable 2 b/r home, divided into 9 paddocks, 95% tractable, perm water supply incl spring-fed dams. \$295,000. Ph: 03-5681-6391.

INCLUDE A PHOTO

Cost is \$15 for a 5.5 cm x 3.5 cm photo.
Phone 03-5792-4000 for more details.

MIRBOO NORTH – GARDENERS' DREAM. Solid brick veneer 2 b/r with separate bungalow & entrance, on 0.4 ac. Large family/lounge room & spacious b/rs. Farmhouse kitchen with dining area. All rooms have views of surrounding gardens with flowers in every season incl roses, camellias, estab trees & shrubs. There is a lge permaculture vegie patch with huge tank for good supply in drier months for garden. There are 2 lge household tanks & new guttering to ensure supply. No more water bills! The property is set amid pastureland with rolling hills around. There is a chook house & run, goat house, storage shed & potting shed. Outdoor eating area & gazebo. Abundant birdlife incl resident honeyeaters, wrens & thrushes. For more info contact: Andrew Newton at Alex Scott & Staff Pty Ltd, 53 Bair St, LEONGATHA. Ph: 03-5662-0922.



SOUTH AUSTRALIA

WIRABARA: 66 ac, 5 km SW of township, adjoining native forest, average r/fall 600 mm approx; two-thirds fenced arable paddocks, winter crk; remainder natural bush. Currently producing free-range poultry. Three b/r w/b house, mains power incl 3-phase. Bore, dam, sheds, coolroom. Offers over \$300,000. Ph: 08-8668-4148.

TASMANIA

OVER 60 ACRES: Lifetime opportunity for sea change in one of world's most beautiful environments. Spectacular views open all sides to expose the magnif Derwent River. Multitude of possible house sites accessible by service tracks, 20 mins drive to Hobart. Two dams, mains water, power close by, fully fenced, 2 cabins. Offering: lge acreage to reside on. Multiple occupancy STCA, later subdivision STCA. This land has all this potential & more. Ph: Elders Brown & Banks, 03-6231-0400.

NEAR LILYDALE, NORTHERN TASMANIA (25 mins from Launceston): Character country 3 b/r cottage circa 1890 on about 4 ac. Renovated house in private rural setting, study, country style kitchen, full central heating, plus lge barn/workshop with mezzanine office/studio above. North-facing slope, orchard, perm crk, valley views. Offers early \$200s. Ph: 03-6395-1309.

Website: www.tassiehideaway.com

GRASSIFIEDS

PROPERTY FOR SALE

TASMANIA

RUSTIC HOME on 24 ac, stone & wood construction, combustion stove heats water. Panoramic views to Table Cape, 25 mins to Wynyard. Private & quiet. Totally organic. \$240,000 ONO. Ph: 03-6445-9118.

FOR RENT/CARETAKER WANTED

WHO WANTS TO SHARE LOVELY HOME, 5 ac, 1 hr from Bendigo & Ballarat, with lady? Male or female, n/s, prefer 50+. Two rooms, bathroom & toilet, share kitchen & part of lounge. \$100 p/w incl water & elec. Ph: 03-5464-1036.

TASMANIA, PERMANENT ACCOMMODATION: Caretaking/assisting with permaculture hobby farm. Ph: 03-6395-4311. Email Farm@RichmanMail.com

TWO-BEDROOM HOUSE, sml quiet coastal village in nat pk, 45 mins Grafton, NSW. Solar power, r/water. \$170 - \$190 p/w. Ph: 0402-890-487.

CHEAP HOLIDAY, 2 hrs Brisbane, \$20 p/w, return companionship & help educated baby boomer with CFS & MCS. Extra quiet, suit meditator/bushwalker/artist. Messages: 07-5497-3013.

KINGSTHORPE (10 mins to Toowoomba) Qld. Person, n/s, to share home on 2 ac with professional semi-retired lady. Offering a home & security. Own b/r, bathroom. Nice gardens. Share expenses & \$65 p/w. Ph: 07-4630-0318 after 20 June.

GARDEN LOVER/CARETAKER WANTED! Caravan on coastal community. Busy natur-
opath needs helping hand. Ph: 02-6651-5115 BH, 02-6653-4635 AH.

FOR SALE

'GRASS ROOTS' MAGS: 8-57, 75-160, excluding 131, 138, 139, 141, 143, 144, 146, 147, 148, 152. Best offer. Ph: 02-4840-2191.

MICRO HYDRO GENERATOR - Rainbow Power Company Pelton wheel, complete with 200 m of cable, conduit, fuse box, wiring. Up to 20 amp output. No batteries. \$1200. Ph: 03-5967-4472, mob: 0418-571-684.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

EARN UP TO \$5000 EVERY WEEK: New opportunity has arrived in Australia. Honest, ethical, full start-up support. For info ph now: 1902-295-108. Call costs \$3.30 min.

WORK FROM HOME: Risk-free Mail Order, part or full time, low set-up cost, free info. Ph: 08-9537-7271.

PLACING AN AD?

See page 75 for details

HOME-BASED BUSINESS: Tea tree products & natural cosmetics. Consumer direct marketing. Free training provided, 90 day refundable. \$49 joining fee incl associate websites. Internet access required.

Website: www.momswin.com/phillipl/

COMMUNITY SHARES

ANGEL INVESTORS/PHILANTHROPISTS SOUGHT: To invest in a serene rural retreat, less than 50 km from Brisbane, on 10 beautiful ac of Russell Island on Moreton Bay. The vision is to create a retreat where you & others can take a break from modern life in natural surroundings. Ph: 0438-674-955 for details.

ANAHATA COMMUNITY, OUTSKIRTS OF AUCKLAND, New Zealand. Rural type environment near city amenities. New residents welcome. See: www.anahata.co.nz for details. Contact by email: inquiries@anahata.co.nz

JUST BECAUSE YOU MOVE TO THE COUNTRY doesn't mean you have to live in isolation. Kookaburra Park Eco-Village has affordable 1 ac freehold blocks near Bundaberg with friends a short walk from your front door, local town just 3 km away & is fully serviced with sealed roads, underground power, irrigation water, private lakes & so much more. Blocks are limited at just \$55,000 so call Natasha on 07-4153-1303 right now for more details.

<http://kookaburra.eco-village.com.au>

PROPERTY WANTED

NORTH-EAST NSW, sml/med acreage land only. Ph: Dave or Melissa, 07-4038-1480. Email: davemelissa@bigpond.com

TASMANIA: LAND WITH PERMANENT WATER in remote (4WD) elevated situation. Shed welcome. JSN, PO Box 130, RAILTON, TAS 7306.

NORTHERN TASMANIA, ACREAGE with running water preferred, cash or exchange 3 b/r house 20 mins from Toowoomba. Ph: 07-4697-1244

PUBLICATIONS

HOME EDUCATION, for info send SAE to: Home Education Network, PO Box 461, DAYLESFORD 3460.

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'THE MIRACLE OF MULCH' by Mary Horsfall: Mulch builds up organic matter, fertility and biodiversity in your soil for long-term garden health. *The Miracle Of Mulch* has vital mulching know-how so you can save water, save money and help the environment. Easy-to-read layout, great pics. \$20 for signed copy from author, incl postage, \$35 for 2. Ph: 0417-569-411, or write: Notable Products, PO Box 101, EUROA 3666.

'NIMBIN NEWS MAGAZINE', is a cooperatively run access magazine with articles & information from Nimbin & other areas. We cover concerns relevant to alternative lifestyles & others looking for the most sustainable way. We are one of the longest running alternative magazines & the Nimbin bioregion is at the forefront in the development of sustainable systems. As networkers we scan many mags for suitable & scarce information for our readers. Subscription: 6 issues for \$20, sample \$3.50. Back copies 5 for \$12 posted. PO Box 209, NIMBIN 2480. *Beyond the Rainbow* - literacy mag. Sub: \$18 per year for 6 editions. Email: nimbinnews@nrg.com.au

'NEW VEGETARIAN & NATURAL HEALTH', the magazine of the Natural Health & Vegetarian societies. Subscribe today, \$30 yearly, and receive: 4 vital magazines, discounts at participating health food stores & natural therapies practitioners listed in magazine. Head Office, 28/541 High St, PENRITH, NSW 2750. Ph: 02-4721-5068.

KEEN TO KEEP CHOOKS OR DUCKS? You need *Starting Out With Chickens*, and *Starting Out With Ducks and Geese*. Books are paperback size, 56 pages, well illustrated. Great for kids or beginners. Buy 1 at \$9.95 incl p&h or 2 for \$16.95 incl p&h. Australasian Poultry, PO Box 438, SEYMOUR 3661 or ph: 03-5792-4000.

'NATIVE STINGLESS BEES' for profit or pleasure - how to get started, pollination/honey potential in Qld. Detailed info booklets, packed with photographs, diagrams. For free catalogue, send name, address & 50 c stamp to: ANBRC, Box 74-G4, NORTH RICHMOND, NSW 2754.

BOOKS, NEW AND OLD. Australian, lifestyle, Pacific, biography, horticulture, gardening, outdoors. Lists avail. BA & JM Wallace, Box 325, PORTLAND 3305.

FOOD & KITCHEN

PRESERVING JARS WITH LIDS: 10 dozen 1 lt jars; 5 dozen 500 ml jars. \$150 the lot + freight. Ph: Denise, 07-4934-2654. THE CAVES, Qld.

GRASSIFIEDS

FOOD & KITCHEN

TVP RECIPE BOOKLET (textured vegetable protein), 12 pages of family recipes. Tried & tested on my own family: bolognese sauce, burger patties & more. Great intro for your family. \$4 + \$1.50 p&h. Send payment to: Wendy Bale, 513 Stokers Rd, DUNBIBLE, NSW 2484. **HOME STONE FLOUR MILLS - WHEATGRASS JUICERS.** Mill your own stoneground wholemeal flour for cakes and bread with a Retsel Little Ark stone flour mill. Start juicing wheatgrass juice at home. Visit www.retsel.com.au 'Endorsed by Housewives' Association.' Write for catalogue: PO Box 712, DANDENONG 3175, enclose 3 postage stamps. Ph: 03-9795-2725. Distributors' enquiries welcome.

STONEGROUND FLOUR in-home, with a SCHNITZER German quality hand or electric stone mill, 6 models from \$178. SCHNITZER MILLS, 420 Freemantle Rd, BATHURST 2795. Ph: 02-6336-9100. Website: www.schnitzer.com.au

MISCELLANEOUS

CARVE YOUR OWN SCULPTURE/PEACE-PIPE. We sell easy-to-carve Kenora black soapstone, in various sizes. Polishes to a beautiful high gloss. Ph: Naomi, 03-5157-3318.

COLLOIDAL SILVER GENERATOR: New design, microprocessor controlled, just add high-grade distilled water. Discount of \$20 by mentioning this advert. Full details on website: www.cs.kestar.com.au

Email: admin@kestar.com.au

TEEPEES, VIKING TENTS, medieval tents, swags, buckskin clothing. Seventeen years experience. BOJO Products, PO Box 112, AVENEL 3664. Ph: 0412-368-034, 03-5796-2753 AH.

Email: bojo_products@hotmail.com

Website: www.frojel.com/members/bojo

HOW TO MAKE MONEY selling & making chess pieces, birdbaths, fine art, gnomes etc. Plaster and/or cement moulds. For methods & catalogue send \$14.95 to: Williams Imports, PO Box 989, SOUTHPORT 4215 (06/50 Railway St). Ph/fax: 07-5532-9050.

Website: www.supermoulds.com.au

GARDEN & ORCHARD

GOURDS, SEEDS, BOOKS AVAILABLE NOW! In our new catalogue. Send 4 stamps to: The Gourd Father, PO Box 298GR, EAST MAITLAND 2323. SPECIAL OFFER! Book on growing & drying gourds plus 2 pkts seeds mixed, 1 sm! & 1 lge + free catalogue \$29.70 incl p&h & GST.

Website: www.thegourdfather.com

IRIS: TALL BEARDED \$7, med \$5, dwf \$2. 'Rose of Sharon', Lot 40 Hopetoun Rd, RUTHERGLEN 3685. Ph: 02-6032-8428. Web: www.tourisminternet.com.au/ruthiris.htm

DEADLINES: GR 170 - 30 JUNE
GR 171 - 30 AUGUST

BAMBOO PLANTS, lge range, best prices. Ph: 07-4129-4470, fax: 07-4129-0130.

Website: www.satcom.net.au/bambooland

COMPANION PLANTING CHART: over 90 vegetables, herbs & fruits, including plants as insect repellents. Sow When Chart: suggested sowing times for 100 vegetables, herbs & flowers. Mail order \$8 each + \$4 p&p. Plum Products (G), PO Box 120, Wards Rd, TAMBO UPPER 3885.

ORGANIC VEGETABLE AND HERB SEED: Select Organic, ph: 07-5533-1177. Write: MS 905, LOWER BEECHMONT 4211. Website: www.selectorganic.com.au

HEALTH & BEAUTY

RETIRED CHEMICAL WORKER: Lifetime exposure various 'nasties'. Ostensibly healthy but concerned long term. Seeking info/dialogue practical detox methods. BRISBANE. Ph: 07-3202-6338 after 7pm please.

OSTARA ORGANICS: ETHICAL, TOXIN-FREE, organic products that are Australian made. Pure & safe baby care, personal care, skin care & cosmetics; envirofriendly home cleaners free of phosphates, sodium salts, fillers or bleaching agents - perfect for greywater reuse systems; alternative health books; nutritionals; world music CDs; compost worms. All relevant products utilise certified organic ingredients & have NO sulphates, fluoride, artificial colours or fragrances; are GM & petrochemical free; contain NO animal ingredients nor caused animal cruelty. Phone for catalogue: 03-5528-4200 or email: ljbford@dodo.com.au

CLUBS

NATIONAL ALLERGY ASSOCIATION of Australia (NAAA) & ECO-CHOICE (our mail-order store). Enquiries; information; clinics; membership & catalogue. Contact NAAA, PO Box 48, HARRIS PARK, NSW 2150. Ph: 0415-928-028. Email: naaaauz@yahoo.com

WANTED

GR BACK ISSUES 1-7, 9-12, 14-16. Ph: 0413-800-022.

COST OF ADS

Cost of Grassified ads does not include any extra formatting: extra bold text, indents, spaces, stars or other symbols. If you require an ad with formatting please enquire about our display advertising rates. Call Sue on 03-5792-4000.

WANTED: HANDYPERSON OR COUPLE to do casual work & live on our property on Tasmania's beautiful east coast. Full details from 03-6372-2626.

Email: newbub@tassie.net.au

LIVESTOCK

LARGE BLACK PIGS (rare breed), docile, free range, healthy. From \$100. Maryborough, Vic. Ph: 0438-438-639.

BANYANDAH ALPACAS is relocating from Traveston in the Noosa Hinterland & is offering for sale good quality male & female alpacas; Suri & Huacaya fleece types in white, fawn, brown, grey & black. Pregnant females from \$2200, stud quality males from \$2200. Contact Dawn Perryman on 0427-367-299 or email: alpaca@banyandah.com for appointment to inspect.

SERVICES OFFERED

HOME PLANS. *The Earth Builders Plan Catalogue* (180 pages), includes: 92 plans for handcrafted buildings (83 homes & 9 workshops, cabin & carport) of mudbrick, rammed earth, stone, pole frame, timber, poured earth, and straw bale (with construction details). Two working drawings for two homes are incl (11 x A3 sheets per working drawing). Mail \$125 (postage has been included) to John Barton Building Design, 89 Camden Rd, NEWTOWN, (Geelong) Vic 3220 or ph: 03-5222-5774 with credit card details. Money orders & cheques accepted. Free brochure avail. Individual home plans drafted & documented.

Email: jbarton@pipeline.com.au

Website: <http://users.pipeline.com.au/jbarton>

HANDCRAFTS

SURI ALPACA YARN (commercially spun), 4 ply in white, fawn, brown & black; also Suri tops & Suri silver (white), all from fine Suri alpacas farmed in Qld using organic management. Yarn is \$8.50 per 100 g (white & brown), \$10 per 100 g (fawn), and \$11 per 100 g (black). Silver \$13 per 100 g & tops \$15 per 100 g. Contact Dawn Perryman on 0427-367-299 or email: alpaca@banyandah.com

STRANDED COTTON BUNDLES, 100 x 8 m skeins, 50 colours - \$28 post free. Big bundles stranded cotton, 230 colours - \$50 post free. Send 50 c stamp for list. ARTY & CRAFTY, PO Box 40, DAW PARK, SA 5041. Ph: 08-8277-3763, fax: 08-8277-9402.

WEAVING REEDS: 8, 10, 12, 15 dents per inch, 18" - 60" from \$1.10 inch. Wire Heddles, 8 1/2" long \$20 per 500. ARTY & CRAFTY 'see above'.

BEADS BEADS BEADS - unique selection of handmade glass, metal & wooden beads. Also findings, threads & kits avail. Catalogue is \$10 with samples. Please send payment to: Tsunami, PO Box 129, WALPOLE 6398.

GRASSIFIEDS

HANDCRAFTS

HANDSPUN YARNS: natural or hand-dyed wool and/or alpaca, 12-14 ply 100 g balls. Ph: 03-6227-9957.

HOLIDAYS

INDIAN PILGRIMAGE TO HIMALAYAN FOOTHILLS in Sept 05/06 for 1 month. Tour: \$3000. Ph: 02-6633-7037.

Email: info@sundararetreat.net

WILDERNESS RETREAT WORKING HOLIDAYS: Experience self-suff living activities at up to 50% off normal price, minimum stay 3 days 25 July to 30 Sept. Visit our website for more details: www.capecassini.com.au or ph: 08-8559-2215.

SUNDARA RETREAT, quiet, secluded, alternative community, cabin, budget prices. Ph: 02-6633-7037 AH.

Website: www.sundararetreat.net

MORUYA – FAR SOUTH COAST NSW, bush cabins, romantic 1 b/r & family 2 b/rs. Open fires. \$350 p/w, \$125 per w/end. Ph: 02-4474-2542, 0427-199-156.

COURSES

PERMACULTURE DESIGN COURSES with Rick & Naomi Coleman, Southern Cross Permaculture Institute. Next course 16 Sept – 1 Oct, 2005. Introduction course 11 – 13 June 2005. Call Naomi: 03-5664-3301 for info or email: scpi@tpg.com.au, website: www.southerncrosspermaculture.com.au

PLACING AN AD?

See page 75 for details

PERMACULTURE VISIONS: Leaders in permaculture learning online. Students in 23 countries: from Alaska to outback Australia. Ask online today. Time to grow.

Website: www.permaculturevisions.com

PERMACULTURE DESIGN COURSE, Bendigo 22 Oct – 5 Nov. Teachers incl David Holmgren, Darren Doherty + other experienced permaculturalists. More info: <http://au.geocities.com/gravelhillgardens/main.html> or Evan Davies on: 03-5442-7699 or 0433-203-727.

CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAMS: Aromatherapy Dip, Vitamin & Nutrition Therapy Dip, Animal Therapies (The Green Vet), Herbal Therapies, Folk Medicine, Psychic Healing, Celtic Wicca, Psychic Development. Free brochure from: Wiccan Home Studies (estab 25 yrs), The Friendly School, PO Box 138, SURRY HILLS 2010. Ph: 02-9319-6166.

Email: owlhome@ozemail.com.au

CALENDAR EVENTS

FAMILY DAY AT COLLINGWOOD CHILDREN'S FARM. Bring your family along to see the milking of the cow at 10am, pony rides & hay rides at 10.30 & also after lunch. BBQ lunch. We have a family day on the first Sunday of each month with a different theme each time. On from 10 – 3pm, Collingwood Children's Farm, St Heliers St, ABBOTSFORD Vic.

LATE GRASSIFIEDS

WANTED, FORDSON EN27 hydraulic linkage arms, back wheel rims 26" & also interested in other working parts. Please write John Webb, PO Box 386, MARYBOROUGH, or ph: 03-5461-1727 after 1 June.

TENTERFIELD, 3 b/r Federation cottage, picket fence around house, partly furnished, 6¼ ac. Parklike grounds in front, covered veggie garden, f/trees, r/water tanks, dble garage, wood heater, RC airconditioner, 5 km town. \$210,000. Ph: 02-6736-4560 Sat to Thurs evenings only.

BLUE FLYER BOOKS – NEW AND USED: Gardening, rural, hobbies, history, machinery etc. Free catalogue. Ph: 07-4696-6108. PO Box 303, HIGHFIELDS, Qld 4352. Website: www.blueflyer.com.au

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Grass Roots General Store



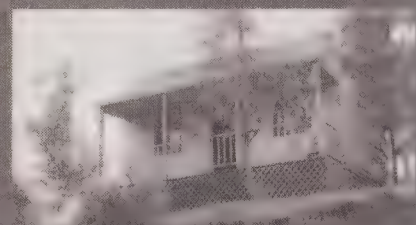
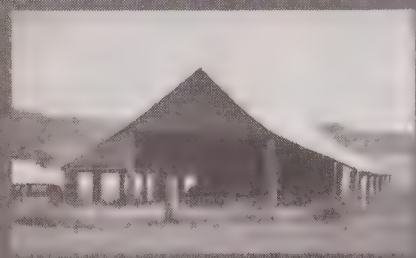
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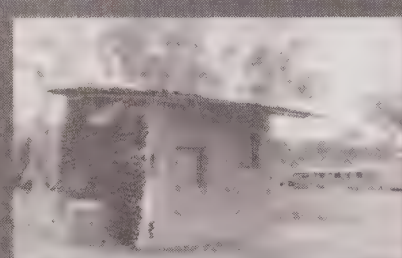
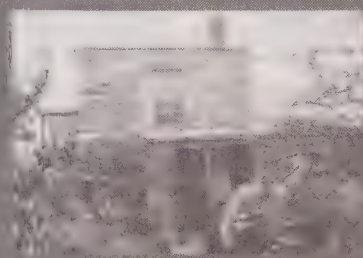
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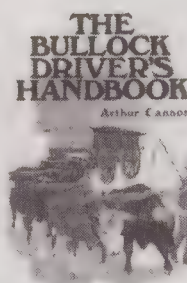
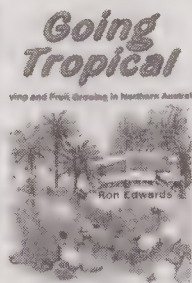
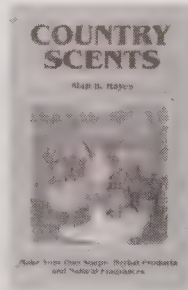
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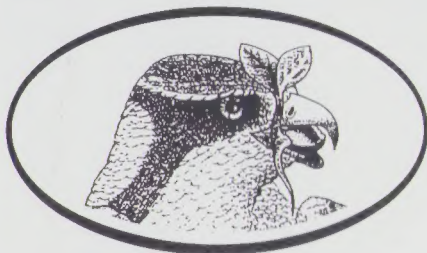
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